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**SOMALIA IN PERSPECTIVE: WHEN
THE SAINTS COME MARCHING IN**

Robert Weil

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10

**THE END OF THE MIDDLE ROAD:
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE
SWEDISH MODEL?**

Kenneth Hermele

CORRESPONDENCE ON PERU



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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

We write shortly after President Clinton's keynote economics speeches of February 15 and 16. They were undoubtedly sterling performances, especially the second one (more on this later). But taken out of context, and judged solely on their content, they could easily be dismissed, perhaps not as much ado about nothing but at any rate as much ado about very little. They do not add up to a "plan," despite the media's fondness for that label. They contain a number of proposals, mostly quite marginal and aimed at reversing reactionary excesses of the previous two administrations. There is much emphasis on deficit reduction but careful avoidance of any recognition that a serious move in that direction would be in flat contradiction to two other goals given equal prominence, economic stimulus and job creation. The dominant theme of the speeches, echoing Clinton's pre-election campaign, is the need for change, but on analysis the change advocated seems to be from the *status quo* (Reagan/Bush) not to something new and different, but to the *status quo ante* (Jimmy Carter).

But this is only half of the story, and probably not the most important half. Put Clinton's speeches back into context and a very different picture emerges. The context is a country in which the great majority of the population is made up of working people, employed and unemployed, who are living through a crisis that began two decades ago when the great—and

(Continued on inside back cover.)



SOMALIA IN PERSPECTIVE: WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

by ROBERT WEIL

When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint.
When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.
—Brazilian Archbishop Dom Helder Camara

On hearing that the U.S. military was being used to bring food to starving people in Somalia, I was reminded that when Ronald Reagan was told of the 1988 hurricane that devastated Nicaragua, he said "Good." His administration refused to supply a cent to help those left homeless and hungry by that storm. But with Congressional approval he later granted tens of millions of dollars in "humanitarian aid" to the Contras to make certain that they would remain as a fighting force through the 1990 elections, adding a few more to the 30,000 already killed, and guaranteeing that Nicaraguans could only end the war by voting the Sandinistas out of power. Now children are once again free to beg on the streets of Nicaragua, a practice virtually eliminated by the Sandinista revolution, though it is all but universal in the Third World. Food, like arms, is a political weapon, and despite all the talk of a new post-cold war world order, it remains so in Somalia and elsewhere today.

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The official Washington line denies this. Instead, it proclaims that this is the first international armed intervention carried out solely for humanitarian purposes. Moreover, this is the initial instance in which the United Nations is intervening without the acceptance of the government involved, on the ground that Somalia has become so anarchic that there is no one left with the authority to approve the action. Claims are similarly being made that the Somalia venture is unique in that U.S. forces are being deployed even though its national interests are not at stake. This is widely held to constitute a radical break in global relations, a new era which leaves behind the political struggles of the Cold War. In this scenario the United States, now freed of the burden of competing with the Soviets, can finally act in a totally selfless manner. Such claims require a willful suspension of belief. It is of course possible that George Bush underwent some kind of political deathbed conversion to humanitarianism. But the evidence does not support this. The same Bush who got so weepy-eyed over a starving child in Somalia was, after all, the one who has caused the deaths from malnutrition and poor sanitation of tens of thousands of Iraqi children through an embargo which the United States refuses to lift until Saddam Hussein is gone. Nor did Bush end the practice of stopping all Haitians picked up at sea, regardless of their reasons for leaving, and sending them back to what for many is arrest, torture, and even death. The embargo against Haiti, of course, has been spottily enforced, so that it has starved the poor but barely affected the government and the rich, while U.S. corporations on the island are specifically exempted. The new Clinton administration has now adopted and extended these policies toward Iraq and Haiti. Yet, we are asked to believe that in Somalia the United States is somehow acting out of purely humanitarian instincts.

But if this is not the case, what are the strategic interests that lie behind the invasion of that country? Despite the changed relationship to Russia, purely geopolitical factors should not be totally discounted. After all, Somalia is still

where it was when the United States armed the dictator Mohammed Siad Barre to help win his allegiance away from his former Soviet backers. Situated at the bottom of the Red Sea, on the Gulf of Aden, right across from Yemen and Saudi Arabia, the Horn of Africa remains critical to the stability of the oil-bearing region which the United States defines as most vital to its interests, and over which it so recently fought the Gulf War. Chaos in this area of the world, no matter what its cause, is a matter of concern to those who believe that Middle East petroleum belongs to the United States and its imperialist allies. With Islamic fundamentalism now dominant in nearby Sudan, and having small but significant followings among some Somalis, and with neighboring Kenya to the south in increasing turmoil, the country can hardly be left to its own purposes, whatever they might be.

But there are other continuities with past U.S. practices as well. This was, after all, the third time within the four short years of the Bush administration, following Panama and Iraq, that the United States invaded a Third World country to disarm the very same “thugs” that it had been massively arming and employing as “assets” only a year or two earlier. Such a raw display of power by the “the only remaining superpower” has its own rationale. Indeed, the more its use of military muscle is riddled with apparent contradictions, the more it enforces the notion that the United States alone is the arbiter of the globe, deciding on its own who will be favored and whom punished. Those who are obedient and serve U.S. interests will be made powerful, but if they then begin to believe they have rights and interests of their own, they will be crushed. Thus there is a special lesson to be taught by destroying the very ones so recently raised up. There is something reminiscent of the Old Testament in all of this.

Even these U.S. concerns to demonstrate its power, however, overlay deeper continuities between the intervention in Somalia and the long history of similar actions throughout the Third World. Military intervention by the United States and other imperialist powers against the peoples of the southern

half of the globe long preceded the Cold War, or even the existence of the Soviet Union. From this historical perspective, it is remarkable how much the ideology of the white man's burden finds a distinct echo in the paternalistic "tough love" of the marines in Somalia. It is the public rationale for such interventions that changes, not the basic purpose. Viewed in this light, the rivalry with the Soviets merely provided one more convenient link in the endless chain of reasons given for the forceful domination of those parts of the globe populated by people of color. All that was needed was to identify a country as "communist," a term conveniently extended to cover any nation that tried to resist U.S. domination and gain control over its own resources—as in Guatemala, Iran, the Dominican Republic, Chile—and its government could be targeted for destruction.

But as the Cold War began to wind down and new forms of resistance like religious fundamentalism arose, a scramble occurred to find alternative justifications for intervention, and for the military budgets of the Pentagon. *The Defense Monitor* (XXI, 4, 1992, p.3) quotes General Colin Powell as saying, "I'm running out of demons. I'm running out of villains." The drug trade was one easy villain to target, especially in Latin America, while "terrorism" became the favored watchword in the Middle East and North Africa. In the name of these new "threats," those who got out of line, like Iran, Libya, and the Shining Path in Peru, even if they were isolated from or bitterly opposed to the Soviets, could still be subjected to economic embargo and military attack.

Sometimes these new rationalizations were combined, as in the term "narco-terrorism" applied to Colombia and the Andes region, providing the basis for the current and growing U.S. military involvement there. A similar effort was initially made to turn the khat-chewing teenagers of Mogadishu into drug-crazed terrorists, but this seems to have fallen flat. What is left as truly "new" in Somalia, therefore, is that "humanitarian aid" has now been added to the long and ever-changing list of excuses that can be called upon for intervention in the

Third World as the need arises. What better cover for military action can there be, after all, than feeding the hungry? What demons can be more villainous, than those who steal food from starving children? This helps to explain the apparent conflict between the United States and UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali over who will disarm Somalia. For the United States, the important thing was to set the precedent for "humanitarian" intervention and to add Africa to the continents which can be openly invaded at will, perhaps with an eye to the deteriorating situations in mineral-rich South Africa or Zaire. Having done this, the United States has little desire to actually resolve the situation in Somalia, which might mean getting bogged down in real fighting, with heavy casualties and the loss of support at home. Better to let the "international community" in the guise of the United Nations take the fall, while the United States gets out as quickly and cheaply as it can.

For all its supposed newness, the Somalian intervention therefore follows the same essential pattern as previous ones. The U.S. military commanders have made it abundantly clear that any resistance in Somalia will lead to the same results as it has elsewhere. If the residents of Mogadishu get in the way, their homes will be flattened, and their uncounted bodies dumped in unmarked graves, just as happened in Panama City. If the teenage technicals give the troops any trouble, they will be slaughtered and left to rot in their vehicles, just as the fleeing Iraqis were on the road out of Kuwait. In the largest such incident, in Kismayu forty Somalis were killed or wounded by U.S. and Belgian troops, with no "allied" casualties. Already the TV screens have been filled with bulky U.S. soldiers throwing Somalis to the ground, and hurling them into the backs of trucks, reminiscent of any night in the ghettos and barrios of Los Angeles or other U.S. cities.

It is true that, after a hesitant start, some of the media have at least made clear that a large proportion of the guns which are now being confronted in Somalia were supplied by the Pentagon itself, and that by propping up the dictatorial

regime of Siad Barre for years, it laid the basis for the present chaos. But this limited mea culpa only serves to further obscure the larger questions. To listen to most commentators, echoing the Washington and the United Nations, the short-term problem is to provide emergency food relief, while the long-term issue is how to disarm Somalia and restore some kind of civic order.

What is not being addressed is who is responsible for a global system that keeps entire regions of the Third World in such desperate poverty that millions face chronic hunger, and where any serious disruption due to climate or civil strife can lead quickly to mass starvation. Nor is it being asked what role U.S. multinational capitalism and its governmental protectors have played in creating and maintaining these conditions. Yet it is here that the deeper national interests of the United States lie, in upholding a world economic system in which millions die of hunger and disease so that others may live in relative comfort, while a few attain heights of almost inconceivable luxury.

Why, in other words, do the poor have no food? What is truly striking about Somalia is not its uniqueness, but its commonality. According to World Bank figures, in 1970 that nation tied for sixth place among the poorest countries in the world, all of them in sub-Saharan Africa, with a per capita GNP of \$80. By 1976, this figure had almost doubled, to \$150, but then things went into reverse. After a decade and a half of stagnation and decline, the figure for 1990 was only \$120. This could be blamed on the Siad Barre regime and the civil war that finally overthrew him, except that virtually all of sub-Saharan Africa has followed more or less the same pattern, with a combined GNP per capita of \$160 in 1970, peaking at \$570 in 1981, and dropping back to \$340 by 1990. Between 1980 and 1990, what the World Bank defines as low-income nations in Africa dropped from \$490 to \$260, a loss of 47 percent in one decade.

This must be contrasted with the experience of the United States and other countries of the imperialist "core."

United States GNP per capita (in current dollars) grew from \$4,970 in 1970 to \$11,990 in 1980, and \$21,790 in 1990, increases of 141 percent and 83 percent respectively. From 1989 to 1990 alone, the figure rose by \$940, or almost three times the entire GNP per capita for sub-Saharan Africa. Thus by 1989 life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa was fifty one years, exactly two thirds of that in the high-income countries, where an average lifespan was seventy six.

But Africa is only the worst case. Globally, the ratio of average GNP per capita in all the countries which the World Bank defines as low-income to those of the countries in the high-income category fell from 1:25 in 1970, to 1:33 in 1980, and 1:56 in 1990. Thus just as the rich got richer and the poor got poorer in the domestic U.S. economy during the late 1970s and 1980s, so too the obscene difference between the wealth of the imperialist core and that of the poor countries of the world grew enormously over the past two decades. This growing polarization and impoverishment is both systemic and systematically enforced, through a combination of debt and commodity bondage. In 1980, eleven out of the eighteen low-income nations with the highest long-term public indebtedness as a percentage of GNP were in sub-Saharan Africa, led by Zambia at 240 percent. Twenty-one out of the thirty countries with the greatest concentration of export value in only three commodities were also in the same region, ranging from Burundi at virtually 100 percent to Rwanda at 77 percent. All but two of the other leaders were oil producers.

Commodity specialization and debt go hand in hand. The IMF, under U.S. domination, uses the leverage of indebtedness to require that production be concentrated on commodity exports. The first consequence of this is to flood the market, resulting, as the *New York Times* recently noted, "in economic 'cures' from Washington that urge them to produce ever more of their commodities, seemingly forcing prices inexorably downward." (Howard W. French, December 25, 1992, p. A8) Through the 1980s, the terms of trade, which measures the relation of export prices to import prices, fell

more rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa than in any other region of the globe, meaning that the region sold its raw materials for less and less while the costs of finished goods purchased from the First World climbed. This is a principal form of the "unequal exchange" which strips the Third World of resources and profits to benefit the imperialist core. sub-Saharan Africa actually suffered a relative, if not absolute, deindustrialization during this decade, as the share of gross domestic product went from 28 percent agriculture and 32 percent industry in 1980, to 31 percent and 26 percent respectively by 1987, reversing fifteen years of the opposite trend. More agricultural production, however, actually meant even less food for local consumption in many cases, as export commodities like coffee and cocoa replaced subsistence crops on which the population depends.

It is the effect of these global relations which must also be understood when, today, so much is made of how Somalia is awash in guns, but without sufficient foodstuffs. Clearly the amount of weaponry there is extremely high. Yet the budget of the Pentagon alone, now just under \$300 billion per year, is almost exactly double the gross domestic product of all of sub-Saharan Africa in 1988. On this amount, almost half a billion people, one tenth of the population of the globe, have to live. The entire gross national product of Somalia in 1985, \$1.56 billion, would not buy a single B-2 Bomber or Seawolf Submarine.

Thus by the mid-1980s, the average Somalian had to live on the equivalent of less than six or seven millionths of what a single weapon cost for the U.S. military. When the relationship of arms to food is made in Somalia, therefore, it is necessary to get beyond the myopic viewpoint that the main problem is the number of AK-47s in the hands of individuals. No doubt that country has its proportional share of those who prey on others. Yet it is remarkable how many members of the U.S. media, including those who should know better, have glibly adopted the official language of "thugs" and "bandits," when even the so-called warlords of that country are but a pale

imitation of the top purveyors of global death and destruction, those who are now so widely hailed as humanitarian saviors.

For the past two decades, as previously in Vietnam and elsewhere, the United States used its vast military and economic power to lead the way not only in making sure that this exploitative world system was maintained, but that any alternatives to the growing polarization of wealth would be viciously crushed. Those who resisted were not only to be driven back into the poverty from which they were trying to emerge, but were to be reduced to the lowest of the low, as an object lesson to all others who might get out of line. Thus in socialist Angola—where the United States armed UNITA under Jonas Savimbi and worked hand-in-hand with South Africa—an estimated 300,000-350,000 were killed, the numbers that are believed to have died in Somalia. Today, the Angolan conflict is being revived, with thousands more dead, as Savimbi refuses to accept his loss in the recent national election.

In Mozambique, South Africa and private right-wing forces in the United States together took over the arming of RENAMO from the former white Rhodesian government, promoting a civil war which has led to a million deaths, reducing this once vibrant revolutionary socialist country to the poorest not only in all of Africa, but in the entire world, with a 1990 GNP per capita of only \$80. Closer to home, there were the Nicaraguan contras, who specialized in targeting economic infrastructure, collective farms, and health and educational facilities. Their GNP per capita also stagnated after growing rapidly to its historic high point under the Sandinistas in 1983 of \$810, better than in Honduras, El Salvador, and three other countries in the region. Today it is common to hear Nicaragua referred to as the second poorest country in the hemisphere, just one notch above that other perennial favorite of U.S. intervention, Haiti. The Nicaraguan infant mortality rate, after falling to half the average for Latin America under the Sandinistas, has recently risen by 70 per cent (*Barricada Internacional*, January 1993, p. 21).

If the cold war competition with the Soviets had really been the primary reason for the devastation of the global South, then U.S. behavior should now be radically changing. But that is not the case. Nowhere is this more evident than in U.S. policy toward Cuba, now cut off from its Soviet relationship. Yet under the pressure from Bill Clinton, who accepted large campaign contributions from the most right-wing of the Cuban exile organizations, the Bush administration signed the Torricelli Bill, tightening the thirty-year trade embargo.

Despite these three decades of enforced regional isolation and a GNP per capita in 1976 of only \$800, Cuba had a life expectancy by 1987 of seventy-five years, the same as that of the United States, the highest in all of Latin America and the Caribbean, and higher than that of the USSR or the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. In 1990, infant mortality in Cuba was only 14 per 1,000 live births, compared to 18 in the industrialized nations, and a soaring 70 on average in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. This was achieved by a universal health care system which ranks with that of the First World, even though it absorbed only 3 percent of the small Cuban GNP in 1990, (*New York Times*, January 11, 1993, p. A6). Compare this to the United States, where 14 percent of GNP in a vastly richer nation still leaves tens of millions without medical protection. Cuba also guarantees food, clothing, and education for all. Desperate ragged children no longer beg on the streets of Havana, nor do they rummage in the garbage dumps as they do on the fringes of virtually all Latin American and Caribbean capitals.

Fidel Castro, the "last communist," refuses to stop talking openly of "why the poor have no food," constantly calls for the redistribution of global wealth and cancellation of Third World debt, and opposes the U.S. action in Somalia as a "cure" that only spreads the disease. Moreover, Cuba has backed up its words with deeds: alone among the Third World nations, it gave military support to Angola against South Africa and the United States, sacrificed its own people to protect Grenada,

and went down the line with the FSLN in Nicaragua to the end.

Nothing would make the U.S. government happier, therefore, than to turn Cuba into another Somalia, to reduce it to the same state of starvation and anarchy, to send the Cuban economy reeling to the bottom of the global heap to join Nicaragua and Mozambique. But this alone will not be enough. For the Somalian venture provides the perfect new rationale for intervention. If only conditions can be made bad enough in Cuba, if the embargo can be screwed so tight as to cause famine, if the cutbacks that are already being forced even in the free-milk program and medical care can be made sufficiently universal, that will be all Washington needs to cry “humanitarian aid” and come to the rescue. Of course, this will just be added to older rationales, like the need to prevent “chaos” ninety miles from home, to protect U.S. national interests, and to “restore democracy” like that which the Cubans enjoyed in the good old days under Fulgencio Batista.

As Bush stated in his valedictory speech at West Point, sometimes a “great power” has to act by itself. It is not for nothing that in Somalia, as in Iraq, the Pentagon insisted that its troops must be under the command of the U.S. alone, no matter what the UN cover under which they operate. Thus the United States turns the United Nations and other global agencies into its puppets, to be used when international authorization seems useful, to be ignored when its self-defined “national interests” make solo action preferable. At the same time, it refuses any restraint on its own actions, rejecting widespread international protests against the Torricelli Bill, as it ignored the World Court order to pay reparations to Nicaragua. If and when the United States decides to act against Cuba, there will be no hesitancy just because the fig leaf of UN or OAS sanction may not be forthcoming. Here too the precedent is being laid in Somalia, and it has a global purpose. The only difference is that if the marines land in Havana, they will likely find more to greet them than CNN.

It is this combination, the unrestrained freedom to intervene after conditions have been made desperate enough, that makes the intervention in Somalia so sinister. Another weapon has been forged and added to the imperial arsenal, giving new meaning to the old Vietnam saying, "We had to destroy it to save it." First wreck an economy, then use the excuse that it is wrecked to intervene. The growing desperation of global polarization, combined with the active destruction of those it opposes, will give the United States many opportunities for just such intervention. For all the claims of selfless humanitarianism, Somalia is only another move in a strategy of global domination.

At best, the Somalian invasion represents not a new era but only a belated and hypocritical attempt to undo some small portion of the damage the United States has done in Africa and the rest of the Third World, to save a few of the lives that it has condemned to hunger, degradation, and war. But even in doing so, it distracts attention from the deeper causes of the famine, while it lays the basis for future attacks on those in the Third World who oppose its global exploitation. With the marines providing "security," one can only imagine the fate that would befall any radical Somalian movement that tried to restructure that society and change its position in the world economy in such a way as to actually eliminate hunger and poverty.

It is nevertheless probable that in the short run this action will help keep an unknown number of Somalis alive, and no one can fail to be moved by those in that country who appealed for outside aid, nor those in the United States, especially African-Americans, who protested the attention being given to white Yugoslavia while Africans starved. The issue, however, is not whether the world community should try to provide relief in such situations, but the form which such assistance should take. There were alternatives to the massive unilateral U.S. invasion, including a more balanced international force under real UN control, heavier reliance on African or Islamic bodies that might have been mobilized, and

attempts to work together with whatever progressive elements were left in Somalia. But these would have strengthened the very forms of egalitarian internationalism and intra-regional activism that the United States wants to weaken, and they would have demonstrated that there are actually ways to resolve conflicts in the world other than by turning to the country that, as U.S. officials never tire of saying, "has to lead." Thus whatever its eventual outcome, calling in the marines in Somalia only serves once again to reinforce the global inequality of power and wealth, and dependency on the imperialist core, which created the war and famine in the first place.

What will create a genuinely new international order is when the United States is restrained like any other country, when it is subject to the command of a UN which truly represents the entire world, when there is a radical redistribution of global wealth, when the right to sovereignty of the smallest nations is as inviolable as that of the largest, and when the world community has the same power, neither more nor less, to intervene to house the homeless in Chicago as to feed the hungry in Kismayu.

Meanwhile, there is not the slightest hint that such a time has arrived. Rather, the United States has arrogated to itself new freedom to intervene when and where it will. The world will pay a heavy price for letting "humanitarian aid" become just one more excuse for the marines to storm ashore.

THE END OF THE MIDDLE ROAD: WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SWEDISH MODEL?

by KENNETH HERMELE

If there is one single industrial product that has symbolized the Swedish “middle road,” it must be the Volvo car: high quality, middle to upper class, safety first, and manufactured in a humane way, without a traditional assembly line. Now this symbol has run up against serious problems. In November 1992, Volvo announced that it would close down two of its assembly plants in Sweden, precisely the two plants in Kalmar and Uddevalla where the new assembly concept was developed. Furthermore, future expansion would only take place at Volvo plants outside Sweden. Saab, which had already been sold to General Motors in an earlier crisis, also announced reductions in production and employment levels. These cutbacks are not just a simple reflection of the global economic crisis. They announce more profound changes in the Swedish model which have taken place over a longer period of time. They also indicate that the middle way has become a dead end.

The Swedish Social Democratic party gained control of the government in 1932. It was not to let go until 1976, forty-four years later, when the government was taken over by a three-party center-conservative coalition. For two consecutive election periods, 1976-1979 and 1979-1982, Social Democracy remained in opposition until it regained power in

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the elections of 1982, only to lose it again in 1991. Thus, Social Democracy maintained a position of political hegemony for the greater part of the period following the Second World War. The political dominance derived from an alliance between the major Swedish industrial firms and organized labor. This alliance constituted the essence of the "Swedish model."

The usual way of defining the Swedish model has focused on big, dominating labor unions and employers' organizations that negotiate peacefully and agree on wages and other work-related issues. Strikes, lockouts, or lesser conflicts are rare, and a common position on what is of mutual benefit is normally reached without severe contradictions. It is true that such a negotiated consensus was an important component of the Swedish model.

But the alliance on which Social Democracy based its rule was both broad and restricted. It was not a bargain struck between capital and labor in general, but a more limited alliance which left important sectors of society on the sidelines. But thus understood, it generated both a broadly based consensus and thorough structural reforms of the economy and society.

Small-scale and family firms were not favored while support was given to big capital. Through the tax system, expanding and investing firms were subsidized at the expense of smaller undertakings. For the Swedish transnational firms, the real effective tax rate on profits was much lower in Sweden than abroad. The outcome was a strong tendency towards concentration and monopolization of the Swedish economy, even in a geographical sense, creating economic growth zones in the South and West at the expense of the remaining parts.

Similarly, organized labor was the major part of the working class to benefit, particularly the metal workers employed by the Swedish transnational companies. The workers' interest in upholding the alliance was interpreted by Social Democracy and the dominant unions, especially the metal workers, as being the promise of increasing real wages at the expense of other aspects of working life. Hence, work content,

responsibility, and other working conditions were sacrificed at the altar of Mammon.

Unorganized workers, part-time workers (especially women), and the labor force of less dynamic sectors such as textiles were left outside the alliance. In the 1980's, the consequences of this segregated labor market led a growing number of people (mostly women, many in part-time employment) to engage in harmful and wasteful occupations modelled on the tradition of Taylorism. It may sound strange, but the fact is that even today plants that are owned by many of Sweden's most renowned firms—among them Volvo, Ericsson, Electrolux, and Saab-Scania—employ one quarter of their labor force doing tasks with short cycles of two minutes only. This means that the same movement has to be repeated thirty times every hour, which inevitably leads to a rapid destruction of nerves and flexibility and causes severe muscular pain. An increasing number of women find themselves handicapped for life at the age of thirty or forty.

This subordination of human needs to the economic interests of a section of the working class resulted in a dramatic widening of the gap between white and blue collar workers in general. One example was the rate of premature deaths. Whereas white and blue collar workers had about the same frequency of premature deaths in 1961, the frequency dropped 25 percent for white collar workers over the next twenty five years, while for blue collar workers it actually increased a little.

The basic factor underpinning the alliance from the point of view of organized labor as well as of industrial capital was that Social Democracy could deliver the goods. Labor wanted a steady rise in real wages and secure employment coupled with improving social security; capital wanted beneficial tax rules supporting its domestic expansion as well as its strategy on international markets. As we shall see, however, this support for the expansion of the dominating Swedish corporations was not unconditional. Social Democracy was a harsh ally in the sense that it only accepted high performance

and the ability to compete internationally. Capital, on the other hand, wanted law and order, political stability, and long-term policies supporting further concentration of economic power. In informal discussions, leading representatives of Swedish industrial capital, among them the Wallenberg family and the Volvo chairman P. G. Gyllenhammar, had grown accustomed to reaching a consensus with Social Democracy.

As long as the expansion of the Swedish transnationals abroad also generated employment at home, the objectives of the two sides of the alliance were not contradictory. But once the transnationals defined their interests as being truly international or even global, then the alliance was at stake. This happened more or less simultaneously with a weakening of the political base of Social Democracy, as the voting pattern in Sweden changed. From the early 1980s, if not earlier, Social Democracy lost influence in the working class while conservative parties gained an unprecedented weight, even in traditional labor strongholds. At the same time, the working class itself was also growing smaller as industrial employment gave way to the service sector. Thus, Social Democracy lost influence with its traditional base, a sector of Swedish society which by itself was becoming of less importance, and was also confronting difficulties in assuring continued benefits for that constituency.

The Concentration of Wealth and Power

The economic and political alliance that was the essence of the Swedish model led to an unusual concentration of economic power in the hands of a small number of private owners, a concentration which has grown ever stronger over the years. The richest 2 percent of households own 62 percent of the shares on the Stockholm stock exchange. A corollary to this is that the major owners concentrate ever more influence in their hands. The five biggest owners in each of the fifty most important companies on the stock market increased

their control of the voting power from 47 percent to 61 percent in the 1978-1988 period.

Likewise, the policy of concentration has enabled a small number of firms to establish themselves as crucial for what is normally called Swedish economic interests. The top twenty industrial transnational corporations account for two thirds of Sweden's industrial exports and almost half of its total exports, they pay for 60 percent of the global industrial outlays on research and development, and they employ 85 percent of all people employed by Swedish transnationals abroad.

The contradictions caused by this concentration of wealth and power are reflected in the differences between classes and social groups which can be found in practically all spheres of life: work conditions, education, cultural activities, food consumption patterns, political participation, etc. Although some of the class-based differences have diminished—e.g. higher education, housing standards—the general pattern is that they remain as strong as ever, with some of them growing even wider in the 1980s. This is particularly so for the wealth distribution, where the richest 2 percent of the households account for 23 percent of the wealth. In fact, the average household grew poorer from 1978-1988, whereas the richest 450 households doubled their assets. Hence, by any standard, Sweden is a monopolized society with the economic power centralized in the hands of a few giant firms and their owners.

From the Swedish Model to the Third Road

Until Social Democracy lost government power in 1976, the Swedish model held together. But the base of the Social Democratic party was growing ever narrower as the contradiction between supporting the expansion of the Swedish transnationals and creating employment and rising real wages at home grew sharper. When Social Democracy regained government power in 1982, it acknowledged a contradiction between the interests of capital and those of the people, at least in the short run. In order to have private firms undertake

investments and keep them “believing in Sweden,” a phrase coined by Volvo’s Gyllenhammar, they were to be offered satisfactory conditions in terms of profit margins. This was an explicit objective of Social Democratic economic policy during the 1980s: to keep capital happy. And the party accepted the price that was to be paid in terms of growing social injustices and inequalities. As the then Social Democratic Minister of Finance, Kjell-Olof Feldt, later said of this policy, “the aim of economic policy was doubtless to increase the share of profits in the national product at the expense of wages.” The Social Democratic party reasoned that it was worth it, since the reward was so great: full employment in a Europe many of whose countries had unemployment running at 8 to 9 percent, and in some cases even higher.

The Social Democratic party called this turnabout in economic policy their “Third Road.” If the common choice for a country to get out of an economic imbalance is either to grow out of the crisis or to save in order to correct the imbalance, the Social Democrats said that they refused to make that choice. Instead, they claimed that they opted for a more ambitious target, which they summed up in this way:

We wanted to reestablish the balance in our economy and at the same time to stimulate the private actors. We wanted to fight unemployment while simultaneously suppressing inflation. We told ourselves that we could work and save ourselves out of the crisis.

The Third Road of social democracy meant more social differentiation, higher concentration of economic power in the hands of Swedish transnational firms and their owners, and giving up the attempt to carry out a development model different from those of other developed capitalist countries.

This spelled the end of the Swedish model, the breakdown of the alliance between labor and capital, as the harvests of the Third Road would be reaped by capital alone. Apart from the fact that this created contradictions between the two parties to the alliance, it also meant a break with the tradition of supporting Swedish corporations only insofar as they con-

tinued to be competitive and productive. During the life of the Swedish model, real wages were kept high and firms were forced to be on their toes or go out of business. This is one of the factors explaining the unusual degree of concentration in the Swedish economy: the strong ate the weak. And Social Democracy was happy to see this happen.

With the Third Road, however, money was easy to make and no special effort was needed to bring forth profits of previously unimaginable size. There was no special need to invest those profits in domestic productive ventures, since business was going so well anyway. Instead, the growing profits bred speculation and inflated the prices of real estate, art, stamps, and the like. In order to find an outlet for all this speculative capital, the Social Democratic government thought it necessary to eliminate the little control over international capital flows that it had previously exerted. Within a year or two, Swedish capital had spilled over into Europe and helped push real estate prices in London and Brussels to record highs.

During the latter half of the 1980s, total direct investments virtually exploded, reaching 84 billion SEK (14 billion U.S. dollars) in 1990. The outflow of capital amounted to as much as 7 percent of Sweden's GNP, or 60 percent of its domestic investment in 1989 and 1990. Approximately 35 percent of those investments were for speculative purposes (real estate and portfolio investments) and centered on London and Brussels. Swedish capital in fact became one of the most active investors in the EC at the end of the 1980s.

This outflow of capital constituted a drain on Sweden's financial resources, and it also meant that productive investments at home were kept low by the giant and quick profits that could be made on speculation both at home and abroad. As we know now, the bubble burst sooner rather than later, and the losses turned out to be enormous. In Sweden, the banking system lost an estimated 90 billion SEK (18 billion U.S. dollars) on the collapse of the real estate market. Here, private and public commercial banks and the normally-con-

servative savings and loan institutions had all participated in the scramble. Their enormous losses are now covered by the Swedish state, i.e., by the taxpayers. Thus, wage earners have paid twice for the policy of the Third Road: first, when their wages were sacrificed in favor of profits, and then again when the banks' losses are covered by the state.

In Search Of New Allies

In September 1991 elections took place in Sweden and the Social Democrats lost. When the Social Democratic leader Ingvar Carlsson came to the television studios to comment on his defeat, he looked happy and relieved. Perhaps he was glad to lose, because he knew that the illusion of the Swedish model could no longer be maintained. There was no longer a common ground for building an alliance between labor and capital as even their short-term interests were at odds.

A four-party coalition government led by the Conservatives took power in 1991 and announced a shift in policy from the Third Road to the Only Road. The two roads are however one and the same, except for the not unimportant difference that the Only Road is totally reckless in letting the impact of the economic crisis be borne by the poorer sections of society, while it is likely that Social Democracy would have made sure to safeguard the living standards of the poorer strata to a greater extent. The similarity between the two roads was substantiated in September 1992, when Conservatives and Social Democrats agreed on the economic policy for the remainder of the election period, thus in principle (although not formally) creating a rule of national unity.

This neatly symbolizes the fact that the special position of Social Democracy in Swedish political life has come to an end. Whereas the Swedish model was based on an alliance between organized labor and industrial capital, today the Social Democratic party is deserting its old political base and is leaning ever more heavily on the bourgeoisie. This came out clearly at the Thirty-First Social Democratic Congress in

1990, where no policy guidelines were put on the table, but the party leadership received instead a *carte blanche* to arrange for broad solutions for all the pressing issues of the time: nuclear energy, transport systems, European integration, and sustainable development. In reality, what the congress did was authorize the party to ally itself with any other party and to seek compromise solutions with whoever could guarantee the retention of government power. It did not work: Social Democracy lost the elections of 1991. But one year later, the new political alliance was formed, uniting Conservatives and Social Democrats. The Swedish model was replaced by an alliance of concrete as it is called in Sweden, indicating its coldheartedness on social issues.

Even before losing the elections of 1991, Social Democracy had decided to submit an application to join the European Community. This was a sign that it had given up its ambition to lead Sweden down a road different from the one reigning in the EC as a whole. Confronted by the overwhelming power of the monsters that Social Democracy itself had nurtured—the Swedish transnational corporations—it opted for handing the reins to the supra-national, undemocratic institutions of the EC. Hence, the Third Road of the 1980s, in which Social Democracy takes pride because it kept unemployment low, cannot be repeated during the 1990s as the party has voluntarily given up the political weapons needed for carrying out such a policy, or for that matter any policy which deviates considerably from that of the EC. As a consequence, Swedish unemployment levels are rising and will by the end of 1992 reach 7 percent, triple their pre-crisis level.

The other parties to the old Swedish alliance, the transnationals, did not remain idle when they saw that the Swedish model was doomed. Already in the early 1980s, leading Swedish industrial firms had begun to prepare for a time when their alliance with Social Democracy would be of little or no value. They foresaw that the golden days of the Swedish model and the alliance it was founded on were over. The most notable case in point is the establishment of the Roundtable

of European Industrialists in 1983, an international lobby and pressure group composed of the leaders of such European transnationals as Fiat, Nestlé, Philips, Olivetti, Renault, Siemens, etc. The initiative to form the Roundtable came from Volvo chairman P. G. Gyllenhammar, who also became its first leader.

The Roundtable heralded a strategic shift as far as Swedish transnational capital is concerned. Although Swedish capital is extremely internationalized, it has always felt secure with the support and backing at home that Social Democracy has been able to provide. Not so any more: Gyllenhammar and his Roundtable confront a situation where the impotence of an ever-weaker Social Democracy requires that the transnationals themselves assume the responsibility for defining long-term policies and making sure that they are carried out. In other words, the breakdown of the Swedish model has led the Swedish transnationals in the same direction as that of Social Democracy itself, from national autonomy and a privileged role for the nation-state to the internationalization and elitism of politics within the framework of the EC.

The Long Road Ahead

Today, the strategic aim of the Swedish transnational firms as well as of the Social Democratic party is to achieve a full-scale and permanent integration with the growth and expansion project of the EC. Instead of advocating the principle of free trade for all—in itself a dubious argument, especially as far as Third World countries are concerned—Swedish Social Democracy now adheres to the limited and restricted freedom of the Common Market, which in essence is a protectionist block directed against the non-European world. Swedish Social Democracy has now chosen the European road and hence to ally itself with the European-superpower-in-the-making against the United States and Japan.

Opposition to this new alliance in Sweden is growing from below, focusing upon issues of ecology, equity, justice,

and international solidarity. It grows out of mixed currents in Swedish political life, encompassing, for example, the losers of the Swedish model as well as of the Third and Only Roads, supporters of a new international economic order, the green and socialist movements, etc. This opposition is still rather weak and quite fragmented, and it will probably take decades before a new social force to reckon with will emerge. Such an opposition may gain strength from quite wide sectors of Swedish society if it manages to bring together the different strands of opposition. It is here, in opposition to the present and past Swedish mainstream development strategies, that a real alternative may emerge, an alternative to question the former roads, an alternative that will put sustainability and international solidarity on its banner. It is also possible that an opposition movement may be inspired by the social invention which generated the consensus of the Swedish model. But this time it must take into account circumstances different from those that ruled during Social Democracy's period of hegemony. To start with, the working class has been greatly reduced, and it is no longer characterized by a common social democratic ideology. Furthermore, broad alliances may be constructed among different social groupings on a common ground of sustainability, quality of life, meeting basic needs, and democratic processes at work and in politics.

But this is certainly for the future. Today, and for quite some time to come, the tune will be called by the traditional wielders of economic and political power.

CORRESPONDENCE

Peru On The Threshold: A Reply To Hobart A. Spalding

by Gary P. Leupp

It is a strange historical interval. Smug pronouncements about the imagined triumph of "Western values" echo hollowly over the carnage in Bosnia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and south Ossetia. Liberal democracy stands nakedly exposed as a charade in Central and Eastern Europe; the Poles who once rallied around Lech Walesa now accord him abysmal ratings in opinion surveys, and by shunning polling booths demonstrate an appropriate contempt for bourgeois politics. Meanwhile the idol of the free market teeters in the wind, as the United States, Germany, and Japan all fortify their blocs, while struggling to overcome their respective crises. The four fifths of humanity who live in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (excluding Japan) have the least to celebrate in the vaunted triumph of capitalism; has its persistence not resulted in a doubling of the gap between rich and poor nations over the last thirty years?

Nowhere do the capitalists' arrogant declarations of victory ring more hollowly than in Peru. Here is the fly in the ointment of the New World Order. Here a twelve-year-old communist insurgency claims to control one third of the country's territory, and operates with apparent impunity in twenty-one of twenty-four departments. It is led by the Communist Party of Peru (Sendero Luminoso), which unlike the Sandinistas, El Salvador's FMLN, and other Third World movements with which many on the U.S. left identify, is an uncompromisingly Marxist-Leninist organization. In the 1990s, that seems to mean a Maoist organization.

Like the first Maoist revolution in China, it is succeeding because it empowers, and conveys a sense of hope to, the most

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desperately poor and most harshly oppressed: landless peasants, shantytown residents, women. It organizes them to confront all the institutions and infrastructure of the state, the legitimacy of which it wholly rejects.

Here and there in Peru, villages led by Party-organized People's Committees openly fly the red flag over land newly liberated from exploitative landlords and distributed among the people. This should occasion celebration among all those who stand with the oppressed and welcome genuine blows against imperialism—especially in this season of widespread demoralization among progressive forces. The Peruvian revolution challenges the complacent self-congratulation of those who authored and continue to author Contra-style terror from Guatemala to Kurdistan to Timor.

Yet many on the U.S. left and in “human rights organizations” do not applaud but rather condemn Peru's ongoing revolutionary process, saving their most denunciatory rhetoric not for the bourgeois state, its Sinchi death squads, paramilitary forces, and international allies, but for Sendero and its People's Guerrilla Army. Their pained references to the revolutionary violence in Peru remind me of Mao's characterization of “even quite revolutionary-minded people” who, in hearing of the Hunan peasant revolt of 1926, could only describe it as “terrible.” Nonsense, argued Mao. Revolution always means exceeding “proper limits”; it means “to create terror for awhile” to overthrow the power of the gentry, who after all have “for ages. . . used their power to tyrannize over the peasants and trample them underfoot.”

Any suggestion that the revolutionary violence of the oppressed and their leadership—even violence that is in specific instances excessive, mistaken, or misdirected—is somehow morally equivalent to, or worse than, the reactionary violence of the bourgeois state, implicitly constitutes an endorsement of the bourgeois state. Hobart A. Spalding's “Peru on the Brink” (*Monthly Review*, January 1992) is just such an endorsement.

Spalding adequately documents the vicious character of the Peruvian regime (even prior to the April *autogolpe*) and the desperate social conditions over which it presides. He seems to appreciate the effectiveness with which Sendero has organized the victims of this state into a political and military force. He notes Sendero's flexibility in winning support in widely differing regions, and concedes that the system of justice established in Sendero-controlled areas works “reasonably well and gains legitimacy from its relatively high level of honesty.” (p. 39) He notes the Maoists' efforts to “insure

that exploitation [of labor power] remains low." He recognizes, rather grudgingly, Sendero's attraction for women, and "many middle- and lower-class Peruvians" because it "offers the possibility for effective action against age-old abuses by the authorities." (p. 41)

Yet the very title of Spalding's piece conveys his alarm that the Peruvian government might actually be overthrown in a mass-based, communist-led revolution. For him, Sendero successes translate into a progressively "worse situation." He bemoans "civil war and chaos" as evils in themselves, and condemns as "political murders" the assassination of mayors and other state officials. (p. 35) He implies—without a shred of evidence—that Sendero's forces target "defenseless peasants and shantytown dwellers," indicating his own preferences in suggesting that the violence inflicted by the armed forces, police, and special forces "*almost* matches that of Sendero." (p. 37) He seems to find comfort, however, in concluding that Sendero has "no real social base" (p. 37), "no specific long-term vision," and can "assuredly not. . . win in the foreseeable future" (p. 41).

There is a lot to refute here. As an historian of East Asia, with no specific expertise in Latin America, I am not particularly well placed to produce such a refutation. But as someone deeply influenced by the Chinese Revolution, someone persuaded of the enduring validity of the communist historical project, I'd like to challenge Spalding's whole outlook on what strikes me as the most exciting and promising communist revolutionary movement anywhere in the world today.

(1) Concerning what Spalding terms the Senderistas' "ruthless tactics," (p. 34) one must ask, "Against whom?" Peruse the Amnesty International and Americas Watch material on Peru (which, let's face it, attempts to transcend considerations of class relations, and strongly implies that the respect of "human rights" is best assured under conditions of multiparty bourgeois "democracy"). You will find in that literature ample documentation for Sendero violence against the state, including the peasant militias the state attempts to organize, against provincial governors and mayors, and various apologists for the existing power structure. The latter include "legal-left" politicians who have since the onset of the war joined ranks with the state apparatus against the insurgency. (Spalding regards the killings of such people as "political murders." Sendero views them as executions expressing the popular will.)

Such sources, however, produce precious little documentation linking Sendero forces to the kind of egregious violence against

civilians practiced routinely, as a matter of policy, by the government. What they indicate, indeed, is that the often spectacular successes of the People's Guerrilla Army in undermining state authority have elicited from the injured state rabidly brutal responses. State organs have produced the majority of the 25,000 deaths in the twelve-year-old war: according to the government's own figures, it had killed 11,872 "presumed subversives" as of August, 1992. Add to these many thousands among the 10,286 fatalities described merely as "civilians." The attitude of the government is summed up in a Peruvian general's comment that, "It is necessary to kill ten peasants to kill one guerrilla."

(2) Spalding contends that Peru's Maoists hold "no specific long-term vision" of the socialist future, and complains that they think only "in negative terms—an end to bourgeois and imperialist domination." (p. 41) That he regards these as negative ends speaks volumes about his own vision of the future. In any case, his essay reveals no evidence that he has seriously studied the Senderistas' ideology or attempted to empathize with its exponents. The fact that he refers to the Communist Party of Peru as a "fanatical 'Maoist' party"—as though its Maoism was somehow in doubt—is telling. One wonders how anyone studying such party documents as *Develop Guerrilla Warfare* (1982), *Don't Vote! Instead, Expand the Guerrilla War to Seize Power for the People* (1985), *Develop the People's War to Serve the World Revolution* (1986), *On Marxism-Leninism-Maoism* (1988), *On Gonzalo Thought* (1988), and the many statements and messages from the party to the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) since 1984 (published in the journal *A World to Win*) could question the Senderistas' Maoist credentials.

The party is a signatory of the 1984 *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* and stresses its high valuation of ties with other Maoist RIM-affiliated parties and organizations. Anyone examining these documents, and others such as the famous interview with Abimael Guzman ("Comrade Gonzalo"), published in 1988, and Guzman's speech "In Celebration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Chinese Revolution" alongside the writings of Mao will observe how conscientiously the Peruvian Communists are applying Maoist principles to their struggle.

Liberals and demoralized, disillusioned, former, or quasi-Marxists most assuredly lack vision. They have no clue as to how to explain the supposed "death of communism," no desire nor ability to apprehend recent events within the framework of Marxist-Leninist theory. The Senderistas in contrast show boundless confidence

and optimism. To reduce their heroic vision to a mere negativity, as Spalding does, is not just to slander them, but to echo the message daily hammered into us by the powers that be: Revolution is a dead end, and elections within the framework of capitalist productive relations are the only hope for positive change.

(3) Spalding declares that the Peruvian Maoists “assuredly” cannot “win in the foreseeable future” because the party “still represents a decided minority and. . . lacks mass organizations and firepower.” (p. 41) He shows more confidence on this point than the RAND Corporation, in its March 1990 report prepared for the U.S. Department of State. In this case I find the latter source more credible. The report’s authors concluded that “Sendero could win,” that a Maoist victory in Peru “has become a plausible outcome” given “Sendero’s vitality as a political force and. . . the government of Peru’s inability to make any serious inroads against the insurgency.” No doubt the Senderistas are a minority—as were the Bolsheviks, the Chinese Communists, and the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam. Haven’t all genuine revolutions to date occurred because of the active participation of a “decided minority?”

As for the lack of mass organizations, I believe Spalding has not done his homework. A Peruvian sociologist recently quoted in *The Christian Science Monitor* asserted that with about 100,000 members, the Communist Party of Peru is the nation’s largest political party. Senderista Open Popular Committees control school throughout Peru, and the Movimiento de Obreros y Trabajadores Clasistas (MOTC), developed by the party, now effectively leads strikes of industrial workers. In contrast, strikes called by the national labor federation (CGTP) fail without MOTC participation. Tens if not hundreds of thousands participate in mass organizations such as the Students’ Revolutionary Front, Women’s Popular Movement, Peasants’ Popular Movement, and Popular Aid. Well organized groups of Peruvian exiles are linked to the party through Sol Peru and other organizations.

While deprecating the prospects for a Maoist victory, Spalding rhetorically asks, “Why does Sendero keep on growing?” He suggests that it “feeds on the economic crisis and disillusionment of youth,” on the “subordination of women,” on the “violence perpetuated by the security forces on the peasantry and slum dwellers.” (p. 40) He notes its appeal among middle-class Peruvians as well. So who is feeding on whom here? It seems to me that the real point is that, while there is no shortage of “left” forces in Peru (including armed groups) who have indeed sought to “feed on”—to exploit—the

oppression of the masses in order to enhance their own positions, Sendero's specific political line and practice have allowed it to achieve what these other groups could not: to transform the rage and bitterness of millions into a disciplined revolutionary force with a reasonable chance of victory.

Even the harshest critics of Sendero Luminoso express respect for its members' painstaking investigation of social conditions, their flexibility in addressing these conditions while building mass support, and their selective, highly effective application of violence in targeting the Peruvian state. But can the Maoists' success to date be some fluke, or a mere reflection of the rottenness of the social fabric? I submit, rather, that it reflects the fundamental soundness of their understanding of the world—the validity of that political line Spalding dismisses as “fanatic” and “ultra-orthodox.” Sendero Luminoso is, in a word, communist. It deserves the sympathy of those of us who continue to take the Marxist-Leninist legacy seriously.

Following the capture of Abimael Guzman (“Chairman Gonzalo”), along with other key party figures, both the Peruvian and U.S. press have jubilantly proclaimed the beginning of the end of Sendero Luminoso. Guzman himself calls his capture “a bend in a long highway,” while a party spokesman in London predicts that the world will soon see that the war in Peru is a People's War, not a Central Committee war. While Guzman's role has indeed been extraordinary, and his capture is in fact a severe blow, the Maoists of Peru will continue to inspire those for whom communism signifies, not a failed past, but a practical goal and achievable vision.

Peru Today: Still on the Brink

by Hobart A. Spalding

This piece updates the Peruvian situation since *MR* published my article in January 1992 and responds to some points raised in Gary P. Leupp's letter.

In general, the Peruvian crisis has continued unabated. The most spectacular single event, however, occurred on 5 April, 1992. President Alberto Fujimori, with the collusion of top military officials, pulled off an auto-coup. He at once announced the dissolution of the national parliament and regional governments, a reorganization of the judiciary, and major changes in the financial system. He sharply attacked traditional political parties and existing institutions as responsible for blocking measures that would lead to the country's national reconstruction, accusing them also of preventing the solution to Peru's major problem of subversion and terrorism. As head of an Emergency and National Reconstruction Government he would rule by decree until the election of a Constituent Democratic Congress (Congreso Constituyente Democrático—CCD) which would frame a new constitution. Fujimori barred all members of the previous congress as well as "traditional politicians" from standing for election. Eventually, he said, the country would return to an effective and legitimate democracy. In a context of a worsening economic situation and growing Sendero Luminoso presence, particularly around greater Lima, some 80 percent of the people in the capital initially backed the coup.¹ Nor could those who denounced the move, including organized labor, mount any significant protest. Nothing demonstrates better the degree to which traditional parties

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have lost legitimacy and credibility as well as any moral authority among the Peruvian people.

Fujimori issued a series of decree laws centralizing power in his own hands, further opening up the economy to foreign capital, eroding what democratic liberties remained (such as new provisions governing workers), and turning over more authority to the military. This process culminated in the so-called bombshell decrees (*decretos bombas*) of November 1991. These acts, combined with a continued economic crunch and an initial failure to significantly halt terrorist attacks, soon led to disillusionment and Fujimori's popularity quickly sank back to pre-coup levels.

In simplest terms, Fujimori's strategy rests on three legs. At the political level, he has kept opposition parties powerless and has built a "legitimate" counter structure that he can control. Elections for the CCD took place in November and those backing the president won 38 percent of the vote and forty-four seats in the new eighty-seat Congress. With the support of a small right-wing party (six seats), his majority seems temporarily safe. Fujimori has made it clear that he considers the CCD (inaugurated in early January 1993) a body for approving his plans, not for initiating programs or even serving as a democratic check or balance. Just before his decree powers expired, he purged both the judiciary and diplomatic corps. Most importantly, he took into his own hands the right to name military commanders-in-chief, bypassing Congress and violating military tradition. He has hinted that he may seek reelection, which is prohibited by the old Constitution. An enabling law has been proposed to the Congress.

But all has not been clear sailing. Although most of the high command backed him, in early November some junior officers attempted a coup against him because they considered the whole process illegal. In early January, the President maintained the commander of the army in office, despite the fact that he had reached retirement age. This provoked a minor crisis within the armed services. Clearly tensions between the president and parts of the military exist. How serious they are is difficult to tell, but the issues of pay levels, promotions and seniority, and control over operations (and rights abuses/corruption) seem thorny. Perhaps as bad, the January 24 municipal elections dealt Fujimori a crushing defeat. His coalition won only one major city. Interestingly, the traditional parties fared badly too, winning in scattered places, but losing Lima and Arequipa, Peru's most important cities where independents got elected.

The second leg is economic. Fujimori has maintained a severe shock plan which has ravaged Peru's economy. This plan, authored by Oxford-trained economist Carlos Boloña, seeks to wring out inflation, to implement an austerity program that involves severe cuts in all government expenditures, and to attract foreign capital in order to return Peru to the good graces of the international financial community. So far, this plan has failed. Peru's economic performance in 1992 proved dismal. The GDP fell by 2.7 percent, and some estimates run as high as 5 percent. Over 85 thousand government employees lost their jobs and many of those recently dismissed never received severance pay. A full 67 percent of all Peruvians (16 million) now live below the poverty line, and 5 percent experience critical poverty. Less than two thirds of eligible children attend secondary school because they work on the streets in order to supplement family incomes. Even the government admits that only 18 percent of the workforce has full-time employment. Although inflation has come down, it still logged 57.7 percent for the year. Recent devaluations may help exports, but surely will drive inflation upward. The current annual deficit, moreover, has grown to around \$1.35bn, a huge sum given the stagnant economy. Lastly, the government's privatization schemes have faltered. It has sold several smaller companies, but the larger ones have not moved, with the sole exception of the iron ore producer, Hierro Peru, which ironically was sold at a premium to Shougang, China's fourth largest company.

Boloña recently resigned (for the second time) over disagreements with Fujimori, who told the IMF that changes in its tentative agreements with Peru will have to come during 1993. Resulting uncertainty has raised questions as to whether Peru can finally begin payments to its lenders, but in late January it announced that the United States and Japan agreed to put up half of the needed money to form a lender's support group and the U.S. rescheduled \$152 million dollars of bilateral debt. Peru is currently negotiating a \$900 million loan from the World Bank to pay its debt to that entity. These steps will, it is hoped, allow the country to regain good standing in the international financial community. Further, if Boloña's plan collapses, it will be hard to put together any international package and the United States has other fish to fry in Peru (see below).

The last leg centers on anti-terrorism, coca, and the United States. As far as the second two are concerned, it is vital that the government curry the favor of the United States, whose attitude will largely determine if Peru gets back into the international financial

community. The United States has taken a mostly favorable attitude towards the elections (it has forgiven some debt this past year), but has told Fujimori that the CCD must be independent and autonomous; that economic reforms must continue and that the country must repay its external debt; and, lastly, that some progress must occur on human rights. While the Fujimori team has hastened to reply that it intends to do all three as quickly as possible, speculation is that these conditions merely represent bargaining chips so that the United States can continue to lay down its anti-coca policy in Peru and assure that neoliberal policies continue. Although during the past year no substantial escalation of U.S. military intervention has taken place, U.S. forces still maintain a decided presence. Without trying to appear so, Fujimori has obeyed the Bush line on coca eradication almost to the letter but, as elsewhere, with little success. The continued involvement of security forces in the trade virtually precludes any effective campaign, were one possible. Fujimori has favored military people accused of drug connections as well as judges lenient on convicted traffickers. Further, the anti-coca campaign clearly has counter-insurgency overtones.²

Fujimori has centralized the fight against subversion in a United Pacification Command. He has significantly altered laws dealing with terrorism by increasing penalties, ordering trials by military courts, and imposing a strict censorship on press and television. Any "apology for terrorism," for example, carries a mandatory life sentence. Human rights organizations, "stupid pawns" of subversion according to Fujimori, have found themselves subject to increased harassment and new crimping regulations, such as a limitation that lawyers could only defend one accused subversive at a time.³

Since Fujimori took office, the toll of violence has increased. PeruPaz, a human rights group, reports 3,101 victims of political violence in 1992 and 7,781 since the new government took power in 1989, a higher daily average than during either of the two previous administrations. Some 280 documented disappearances occurred, mostly attributable to the military. An Americas Watch report noted systematic rape used as an interrogation technique by security forces as well as Sendero's specific targeting of women activists who remain in the forefront of the non-Sendero popular movement. Right-wing paramilitary groups continue to operate with impunity. Overall the toll is 27,000 and climbing, not counting the tens of thousands forced to emigrate.⁴

During the first part of 1992 Sendero continued on the offensive. According to non-Sendero sources, the organization carried out some 1,383 actions during the year, and it clearly expanded its presence in the shantytowns around Lima. But Sendero then suffered some startling reverses. Most important, on September 13, state security agents captured its leader Abimael Guzmán (Presidente Gonzalo) in Lima along with other members of the Central Committee. This seemed to unleash a feeding frenzy among security forces who upped the level of raids on shantytowns, the numbers of detainees, and the roster of victims. Shortly thereafter, a number of members of Sendero regional committees fell to government security forces and, according to Peruvian sources, the state also captured several other high ranking Senderistas. In the months before these blows, the government had arrested some people belonging to Popular Help (Socorro Popular), Sendero's logistical support group as well as lawyers who had defended those accused of terrorism. Most recently the lawyers representing Guzman received life sentences under the anti-terrorist law. Finally, after a four day battle, the army rooted out Sendero prisoners in Canto Grande jail, killing as many as fifty people.

Perhaps naturally, Sendero has seemed to recoil from these setbacks. The level of attacks has subsided and now are "dispersed and lacking precision." (PeruPaz) An announced "Red October" did not occur, and the latest armed strikes (stoppages called by Sendero on pain of death for violators) in Lima seem to have lost some steam. Sendero has more recently taken to planting car bombs in Lima, some against specific targets and others not. Further, for the coming national mayoralty elections more candidates have presented themselves than in the past few years, a sign that Sendero's warnings that participation in bourgeois politics means reprisals now hold less terror. In fact, the elections went relatively smoothly despite a spate of Sendero attacks, including the assassination of a mayoralty candidate in Villa El Salvador. Finally, there are indications that a new amnesty program may be having an effect. Brokered by the Catholic Church, its main impact has been within the ranks of the Castroite MRTA, Peru's second largest guerrilla group. Senderistas, however, have also turned themselves in. Radio Havana reported that over a hundred have surrendered in the past weeks and other sources corroborate this. Ultimately, it is too early to tell the exact impact of the above on Sendero and only history will tell if this represents a "bend in the road," as Guzmán has

predicted, or a major turning point in the twelve-year-old Peruvian civil war.

Turning more specifically to Gary P. Leupp, some points merit comment. He says that Sendero succeeds because it empowers landless peasants, shantytown residents, women. But what kind of empowerment are we really talking about? Does Sendero empower people in a truly democratic fashion? All evidence says not. Like Leupp, I have never visited a Sendero liberated zone, but I have spent time in Peru during the past three years, have read extensively about the country, and have talked to people who live there. In my view, Sendero is a top-down, anti-democratic organization which demands total allegiance to a line forged solely by the Central Committee and its leader Presidente Gonzalo ("Gonzalo Thought"). The organization demands 100 percent allegiance to that line, no questions asked. Its ideology mirrors its view on life, a manichean one: there is good and there is evil. Those not 100 percent on the side of good are evil and are therefore fair game for "people's justice."⁵ This does not match my political or intellectual experience. I am particularly struck by the apparent contrasts between the atmosphere in Sendero liberated zones and that of similar areas during the Yennan period in the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese Communist Party. The degree of difference in repression, violence, and regimentation appears notable. This is not to deny that some short range improvements do not accrue to those who live in Sendero zones; but never think that they are democratically run communes. In them, Sendero controls all, commands all, and judges all.

Does teaching a teenager how to make a satchel bomb or giving her a gun really empower? Various interviews with senderistas have indicated that a lot of the "revolutionary people's violence" has been carried out for much the same reasons that U.S. teenagers join gangs that practice violence. This may prove attractive to the individual and provide a means to strike back at the forces that have oppressed them, but does killing a policeman or neighborhood organizer really build revolutionary consciousness?

Sendero openly preaches that all people who have any truck with the bourgeois state (even if they oppose it) are automatically enemies, that any dealing with the enemy makes one a traitor. This then leads to the conclusion that these human beings can be eliminated as a revolutionary act. I disagree. The assassination of María Elena Moyano in February 1992 because she founded a Glass of Milk program, occupied the office of deputy mayor in Villa El

Salvador (one of Peru's largest shantytowns), and worse, refused to be intimidated by Sendero into supporting their armed strike, does not translate into an heroic act in the name of the people or even a blow against the bourgeoisie (or bureaucratic capitalism to use Sendero's term). In fact, the deed lost ground for Sendero in Villa El Salvador, and massive protest rallies showed popular repudiation of the act, and by extension Sendero Luminoso.

I further reject Leupp's contention that "even violence that is in specific instances excessive, mistaken, or misdirected" is legitimate. I am not a partisan of the blind philosophy of, as some anarchists put it long before Mao or Gonzalo, proletarian violence in the face of bourgeois violence. I do not deny that the bourgeois state does perpetrate widespread violence against people on a daily basis in ways beyond the repressive apparatus (e.g. 70,000 Peruvian children die yearly from hunger). But I am not sure that the way to overthrow that state lies exclusively in a policy of armed struggle. Historically, classes do not give up power peacefully and no socialist movement has succeeded yet without armed struggle. Those which have tried (i.e. Allende in Chile) failed. But I distrust a doctrine or line that rests totally on armed struggle as the only means or that gives it such primacy as to minimize any other possibilities. I still believe, unlike Sendero, that electoral politics have a value in given situations and that working within communities for basic human improvements does too. A movement bound to just those two elements over time may ultimately fail, but surely so will one based purely on the use of force not only against "the class enemy," i.e. anyone who does not agree the Party totally, but also against dissidents within its own ranks. In building a movement for social change, particularly in its early stages, strategic alliances are necessary. If we look objectively at history, the record is clear. The Cuban 26th of July Movement allied with Catholic, radical student, and left-wing social democratic groups. The Bolsheviks worked with other anti-Tsarist and anti-feudal groups, and the early Soviets contained a multiplicity of parties and factions. Mao, even after the KMT massacred his urban and rural cadre in the late 1920s, allied with them, against the Japanese. Would Sendero suddenly form a pact with an anti-imperialist left—whose members they have systematically slaughtered—if the United States escalated its activities in Peru? So far, despite the slowly growing U.S. presence which SL literature constantly plays up (see *Revolutionary Worker* or *Diario Internacional*), few or no hints of that have surfaced. In the interim, Sendero continues to murder activists of any stripe but their own.

Leupp makes one valid point. When I said that Sendero had no program, I should have said no real program other than a military one, and that one in itself is vague and confused at times. And let us not substitute sloganeering for a political program. I confess to not having read every word of "Presidente Gonzalo Thought," but I have read the oft quoted "Interview with Chairman Gonzalo" done by *El Diario* (Published by the Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru, Berkeley, 1991) and pamphlets published by Ediciones Bandera Roja. Those pages contain a particular analysis of history and the historical process, but one with which for many the reasons, some already stipulated, I disagree.⁵

Believing one's own propaganda is satisfying because then one is always correct. Many who participated in the left during the 1960s went through that experience. Most found out that truth is evasive and changing, even though some basic principles remain the same. Where does the figure of 100,000 members of Sendero Luminoso come from? An unknown Peruvian sociologist's estimate is not good enough for me. Observers put Sendero strength at 5,000 core activists plus supporters. Are these supporters Party members? Not according to most sources. I think grouping all fighters plus support infrastructure plus active sympathizers would not even reach 100,000 (among Peru's 24 million). Leupp also exaggerates the role of the MOTC, which he sees as the guiding light of the labor movement. Does it exist? Yes, mostly as a shadowy paper organization. Sendero does have a following in certain unions such as those of the miners, teachers, and public service workers, but the MOTC hardly represents the vanguard organization portrayed in his letter.

Finally, I still do not believe that Sendero Luminoso can win in the near future and less so given the events of the past year, even recognizing the organization's strengths, and they do exist. The fact that Sendero or Sendero-like organizations have recently shown signs of activity in both Bolivia and Ecuador, must also be factored into any equation. Although most view this as echo effect rather than a spread of the Peruvian organization, it must be taken seriously. I think that in order to win, Sendero has to find a way to broaden its base in the face of very difficult circumstances. The Peruvian counter-insurgency effort has not yet shown signs of seriously falling apart and even seems to have gotten something of a second wind, particularly after the capture of Guzmán. Placing car bombs (or dog bombs—devices attached to stray dogs) in downtown Lima or its upper class suburbs, may scare the petit and grand bourgeoisie, but it will hardly win the war. Meanwhile, the United States waits in the

wings with a low intensity conflict plan or one for more massive intervention if Fujimori (or any bourgeois government) gets seriously threatened. Some even argue that Sendero serves the military and Fujimori. Since it already exists, it provides excuses for dictatorial behavior as well as the systematic elimination of the left and popular organizations, work which Sendero cheerfully helps to carry out, although this may be too Machiavellian. But I also believe that Sendero Luminoso cannot win because of its self-imposed limits. Will it then disappear? Not likely soon. The basis for continued recruitment still exists and will exist for a time. Sendero will continue to have a guerrilla presence. (see the *New York Times*, February 5, 1993, p. A3) The big question is whether Sendero can survive recent blows and still maintain the same level of activity and indeed escalate it?

Fujimori and some of the generals correctly note that the answer to Peru's crisis lies in socio-economic solutions, not in pure repression of terrorism and dissent. The problem is that the policies to produce that result would threaten their own existence. The great tragedy for Peru today, beyond the continued unforgivable cost in human lives and misery, is that several decades of left organizing and building grassroots organizations may have gone for naught by the time this war ends. Peru still teeters on the brink, but of exactly what, remains clouded.

NOTES

1. Carmen Rosa Balbi, "Perú. El Golpe y los Problemas de la Transición a la Democracia" in *Nueva Sociedad*, Caracas: No. 121, September-October, 1992, p. 410.
2. *Latin America Weekly Report*, January 21, 1993; and Deborah Poole and Gerardo Rénique, *Peru: Time of Fear* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1992) pp. 196-202.
3. *Latinamerica Press*, Lima, Peru, October 15, 1992, p.3.
4. *Latin America Weekly Report*, January 23, 1993.
5. Poole and Rénique, *ibid.*, chaps. 1-3.

BOOKS

The Cultural Left Reconsidered

by Paul Buhle

The Responsibility of Intellectuals: Selected Essays on Marxist Traditions in Cultural Commitment by Alan Wald. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1992. 272 pp., \$45.

At one point in *The Responsibility of Intellectuals*, author Alan Wald tells us with disarming frankness:

I write as someone who spent fifteen years research and publishing about the left under the belief that, due to the horrors of the Stalinist regime, the central tradition of the U.S. left has to stand apart from the Communist Party. It was only in the early 1980s that I concluded that this couldn't be done because the Communist Party was central, and the other traditions too narrow to constitute an independent foundation.

I should immediately admit that this passage occurs in an essay about my own volume, *Marxism in the United States*. But Wald is by no means alone, nor even particularly tardy in his difficult shift of focus. Most of us who came of age politically in the 1960s and later worked on 1930s-1940s culture have clawed through the briarpatch of ideologies, making our way to the messages between the lines of the old magazines and to the real people behind the ideological rhetoric. It has been quite a trek, and we sometimes still find ourselves in the uncomfortable position of outsiders facing elderly radicals (particularly the victims of McCarthyism) who are pessimistic that anyone younger can possibly understand the mixture of American leftwing myths and realities, the experiences of the Depression, the Second World War, and the red scare. They have a

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point, in part because we cannot share their old loyalties, even if we feel the deepest empathy for their lives of struggle and for the personal idealism that kept them going. All we can really answer, in short, is: we're trying.

1

Not so long ago, the history of the cultural left in the 1930s-1940s seemed a mere byproduct of after-experience, the leading characters and the lines of interpretation framed by recollections of old rivalries. By the early 1960s the Communist-linked *New Masses* and its would-be successors had disbanded, leaving many participants disillusioned with the overheated defense of Russia and the sometimes bruising treatment of artistic freedom. Meanwhile, its arch-enemy *Partisan Review*, with short-lived Trotskyist credentials, had gone on to become an institution of the empowered avant-garde, upholder alike of Abstract Expressionism and of U.S. cold-war politics. Literary communism had few defenders among the scholars or memoirists of those days, while the *PR* circle launched a cottage industry of fiction and non-fiction (the two not always clearly separated) about themselves and their *oeuvre*. As new generations of scholars came onto the scene, the focus remained strangely fixed. A faithful remnant joined by a few younger voices on one side looked back to the 1930s as a Golden Age of committed literati, while the other school described at great length a "Red Decade" of sterile proletarian pretensions and of creative but finally anti-political outreach to European aesthetic traditions.

This set piece not only defined the 1930s, it also seemed for a long time to establish the formal terms of literary-cultural interpretation for much of the rest of the twentieth century. Looking backward in time, Daniel Aaron's classic *Writers on the Left* (1961), in many ways a remarkably balanced work for an America just coming out of the McCarthy Era, nevertheless bore the flaws of its origin. Treating the thirties as a sort of climax of left literary commitment (albeit, from Aaron's viewpoint, a distorted or even perverted climax), *Writers on the Left* looked back on earlier days with hazy or rose-colored glasses, and beyond the 1930s with the dark-tinted lenses of literary decline amidst mass culture. As Wald has detailed in the introduction to a new edition of Aaron's work, *Writers on the Left* has nevertheless retained a near-canonical status ever since.¹

The various elements of the story that Aaron missed tended to be lost from sight until very recent days. He passed by, for instance, the terrible collusion of American liberalism (like European social democracy) with the war mobilization of 1913-1919 and the accompanying intellectual collapse of existing socialist visions. He also missed entirely the broad spectrum of radical writers and readers outside the English language, especially, but not only, in Yiddish, who had special geopolitical reasons for attachment to the new Soviet Union: their homelands bordered on it and their countrymen and countrywomen faced a terrifying future without a supportive USSR.² In short, and despite Aaron's attempts to be fair, he badly caricatured the drift toward communism. His literary communists naturally became wooden figures, either Machiavellian or deluded or both. Descriptions of their politics largely substituted for analyses of their individual approaches to their creative or critical work—exactly the equation that the *Partisan Review* intellectuals refused for themselves and their favorite European writers.

Worse, although hardly Aaron's intent, his analysis offered ammunition to the former rebels of 1930s-1940s vintage who had turned rightward and felt only the utmost hostility for the return to cultural radicalism in the late 1960s. Popular culture had been branded, as early as the 1940s, the bastard child of commercialism and communist manipulation of art. Twenty years later, generational enthusiasms for black-originated rock music, for pop art antiwar posters, and for a generalized culture of upheaval, struck the grizzled ex-left literary polemicists as utterly repellant aesthetically and politically, the veritable proof of the Popular Front's heinous and lasting influences on American life.³ Into the 1990s, the framework amazingly endures: realist cinema of John Sayles or a TV drama about McCarthy counsel Roy Cohn are often seen as suspiciously close to 1930s-1940s Popular Front modes, while the neo-conservative *New Criterion* and Irving Kristol—their sentiments popularized by Dan Quayle—bewail the alleged subversive role of popular culture at large.

2

The problem with looking at things in this way is that such interpretations do not really explain the 1930s and that they over-interpret or simply muddle almost everything else on the cultural map. One cause for the problem is clear. So much time and effort

have been spent upon the writings of the *Partisan Review* circle and so little attention paid to the complex and deeply contradictory currents of the Popular Front milieu, including its plethora of varied individual artists, that the tail has long been wagging the dog. We owe Alan Wald a great debt for having finished off the subject in a convincing way. His judicious, critical and exhaustive study, *The New York Intellectuals* (1987), will stand for a long time as the definitive effort to explain the historical sojourn of the “anti-Stalinist” writers and critics.

One of the real pleasures of *The Responsibility of Intellectuals* is that Wald tells us how this work came about. A 1960s activist with the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at Antioch College, he went over to the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party, bringing to Trotskyism his whole self, including the fresh lessons of the sixties and early seventies in matters of race, nationality, and gender. Time passed, his particular organizational affiliations fell away, but the scholar-critic has remained at his task, described in this book as “critically [reconstructing] models for contemplation in light of the ever-changing exigencies of the ongoing socialist project.”

For a budding Trotskyist intellectual drawn to American literary history, the main chore had to be the story of those who remained true to their early dedication, even at the cost of also remaining in every sense marginal. *The Revolutionary Imagination: The Poetry and Politics of John Wheelwright and Sherry Mangen* (1983) was a remarkable text which asked serious questions about the junctures of political life and the artistic avant-garde. As in *The New York Intellectuals*, the care Wald gave here to the delineation of individual lives, his feeling for the often-conflicting needs of commitment and artistic creativity, and his summaries of fiction, poetry, or criticism altogether offer a model of how intellectual history should be written. He even has a keen eye for the hilarious. One of the protagonists of this work was prone, he notes, to attend Socialist Party meetings in a tuxedo and answered a policeman who asked why he was in a Depression breadline wearing a racoon coat, “I’m a poet!” That the same figure was simultaneously a Trotskyist pamphleteer and a determined Anglican (also an underground writer of homosexual erotic poetry) might seem daunting to other scholars of Marxist intellectual history; Wald’s natural generosity is his guide to the odd corners of American life and the rebels who lived there.

3

Wald's turn toward the history of the wider or larger left was partly provoked, he would say, by the persistence of left mythology and/or critical silence. Attending the American Writers Congress of 1981, a *déjà vu* of sorts for events forty-some years earlier, Wald finds too many difficult issues concerning the earlier Congress and its communist-shaped literary politics pushed under the historical rug. In the process, an opportunity to tackle the key problem of radical and/or popular art that involves every insurgent artist or critic was unnecessarily lost.

He faces this crucial issue squarely, in one of the best essays of the volume under review, by treating the "Legacy of Howard Fast." A familiar line of attack on Fast, he notes, is framed in a general contempt for the artists of all mass production work. Fast has indeed been a self-conscious writer for the popular market (his astonishing output includes science fiction, Zen stories, "women's novels," Hollywood scenarist work, and a veritable deluge of historical fiction). But he has had his own definite integrity. He took jail rather than releasing names to the House Committee for UnAmerican Activities. While in prison for three months, he wrote *Spartacus*—and established his own publishing company to fight the blacklist. This novel, remarkably enough, became the first self-published left best-seller since nineteenth century socialist George Lippard's similarly privately-published but massively successful "pulp" work, *Monks of Monk Hall*.⁴ In film version, it broke the Hollywood blacklist.

Attacks on Fast's style, Wald argues, generally miss the point that formula-writing as much as experimental writing requires a creative process which demands to be treated critically. The two greatest best-sellers of the nineteenth century, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, could easily be (and have been) accused of gross sentimentalism and stylized prose. What else do we need to know, however, to understand why these books changed minds, reaching millions of readers prepared to embrace abolitionism or versions of socialism? More to the point for recent critical studies, what can we learn about the writing (also acting and assorted technical work) in Hollywood and the television studios that helps explain the continuation of avant-garde and rebellious thematics when American politics shuts out the left altogether? My own oral history fieldwork with Holly-

wood blacklistees, an extraordinary group of talented radicals, suggests a high degree of intellectual sophistication among writers of work ranging from 1940s film classics like "Woman of the Year" or "Body and Soul" to TV's "You Are There," "Robin Hood," and even "Hogan's Heroes." The critics have just not bothered to look and listen.

Wald, who sticks with literature, probes the questions of character and scene, proposing the theoretical guidelines of Georg Lukacs and Raymond Williams alongside the achievements of such contemporary writers as Maxine Hong Kingston, Toni Morrison, and Leslie Silko to show what might be achieved in the popular realm. He wisely disclaims any blueprints for the "radical artist's relationship to mass culture," however, adding properly that the open, uninhibited exchange of ideas between artists, activists, and the audience offers the best and truest avenue for this and every other genre.

Wald's ideal dialogue takes us a long way from the star chambers of either the political-cultural party functionary or the academic-literary doyen. Unfortunately, the sections of *The Responsibility of the Intellectuals* treating the campus political-cultural discussions of the 1970s show that even without these censorious figures, conditions remain far from ideal. Wald places himself unambiguously within the movements for cultural diversity of campus life and curriculum, but as he painfully notes at one point, the professors' initiatives toward change via the classroom are rarely effective unless encouraged and accompanied by mass movements of students themselves.

What should the movements demand or seek to create? Not administrative solutions, which even at their best do not address the deeply woven assumptions of the American college or university within a world of impoverished and mostly non-white peoples. Rather, he hopes to see a truly democratic and ongoing discussion. Socialists—whether students, faculty, or administrators—have a special role to play here, but their role is not to bludgeon anyone for "incorrect" ideas.⁵ The specific problems of the 1930s-1940s, the Great Depression, and the Cold War, communism, and anti-communism, may be gone or at least fading. Newer problems and sources of division among intellectuals, just as plaguing and perhaps even more confusing, are very much with us. What we seem to need most now is the political integrity to stick by a vision of a cooperative world, and the patience to see (and assist) the new movements emerging on the horizon.

4

But at least our historical perspective grows clearer. Wald has many smaller points, here and there, about various thirties and forties writers and artists. All deserve to be taken in as worthy contributions to the collective effort involving the radical art of the century. The larger work continues to grow.

What Wald contributes in density of research in *The New York Intellectuals*, for instance, Rebecca Zurier adds in artistic precision and example (reprinting large quantities of stunning drawings) in *Art of the Masses*. Here we learn, in ways that Daniel Aaron and his contemporaries who were shaped intellectually in the 1930s-1950s did not begin to understand, why and how the radical artists of the 1910s could make such amazing technical breakthroughs. We also see that these artists had their own sharp differences, in many ways foreshadowing the political-cultural debates of the 1930s and later.

At the other end of the century, the 1970s-1990s, a plethora of current interpretation likewise brings us further and further away from the old political debates as such, although not so far from many underlying issues. When George Lipsitz, the most nimble current historian of popular culture, takes on African-American Mardi Gras rituals, Chicano Rock bands, and "Miami Vice," he has reached far beyond the limits of the 1930s literary debates. But the search for what another Albert Murray calls the "incontestably mulaTto nature of American culture" evokes the radical commonalities of Herman Melville, Willa Cather, and Alice Walker, among countless others.⁶ The search has only begun.

These discussions, altogether, begin to restore the 1930s and 1940s to their proper place, neither higher nor lower than various eras of cultural radicalism. And they will help us to re-examine the old quarrels, as well as the little examined technical elements and underlying assumptions. A growing circle of scholars has begun to probe the Great Depression culture that allowed artists a few spectacular years with a large popular constituency which believed in the probability or inevitability of a different sort of American society ahead—and anguished when the hopes of the 1930s turned sour in the late 1940s. Great and popular art, from the WPA murals to Woody Guthrie to film noir, survives to tell us much about possibilities of radical contributions. When we reach a new understanding of artist, genre and audience, we will have this large collective

contribution to build on. And we will have no one critic to thank more than Alan Wald.

NOTES

1. Alan Wald, "Introduction to Morningside Books Edition," *Writers on the Left* (Dayton: Morningside Bookshop, 1992).
2. Not only was the Yiddish literary milieu substantial and vital in the 1910s-1920s, but in a smaller way, Slovenian, Lithuanian, Chinese and Finnish writers among others wrote radical novels for eager audiences—usually serialized in the daily or weekly leftwing press of the language. As late as the 1920s, the old German-American radical movement also promoted a vigorous literary milieu around the daily *New Yorker Volkszeitung*, and one could find real literary cultures if few novels among the radical Puerto Rican, Hungarian, Japanese, etc. I try to give some sense of this variety in *Marxism in the United States* (London, 1991 edition) and more details can be found in the *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), edited by Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas.
3. Former *New Masses* editor Joseph North, publishing a 1969 anthology of his old journal, sought to confirm this correlation in a positive way, insisting on "how much in common the sixties had with the thirties." (Joseph North, "Prologue," to *New Masses: An Anthology of the Rebel Thirties*. New York: 1969, p. 34) The book contains much of value, but its first regular cartoon is a ridiculing depiction of Trotskyists as wealthy dilettantes: a reminder that old wounds don't close.
4. Known as the "American Eugene Sue," Lippard was a ferociously anti-capitalist, Ricardian socialist writer-publisher for the story newspapers, and a founder of the Brotherhood of Labor, an important precursor to the Knights of Labor. Leslie Fiedler, one of the most brutally invective of the *Partisan Review* crowd, but oddly also one of the least hostile to 1960s youth culture, reversed himself to write an interesting introduction to the reprint of Lippard's novel. See *Monks of Monk Hall* (New York, 1970).
5. My mass culture/left culture interviews, conducted for a book I am writing, will be archived at New York University's Tamiment Library in 1993. I plan to do more interviews with progressives involved in popular culture, and urge those interested to contact me via the American Civilization Department, Brown University, Providence RI 02912. I wish to thank the Southern California Library and Marvin Goldsmith for making the first "Hollywood Series" possible.
6. I have oversimplified here, for the sake of argument. Wald believes in the right of a racial minority or persecuted group to demand protection against abuse, even the verbal abuse of "fighting words" like "nigger." While stressing the responsibility of socialists to support that demand, he weighs heaviest on the side of free speech.



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by W.H. Locke Anderson

Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust by Gay Block and Malka Drucker. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1992. 255 pp. \$49.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

As the twentieth century comes to a close, we begin to look back at the major events, developments, and movements by which future generations will characterize and comprehend its political history—the two world wars, the Russian and Chinese revolutions, the anti-colonial wars in the south, the liberation movements among people of color in the Americas and Africa, the breakup of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc, and of course the Holocaust, the systematic slaughter of six million innocents by the very civilized Germans and their collaborators.

The present book, as the title suggests, is about resistance to the Holocaust. It is a stunning book, exquisitely produced by Holmes & Meier, with breathtaking photographs by Gay Block accompanied by commentary and interviews by Malka Drucker. They portray some of the people who sheltered and otherwise assisted Jews during the Nazi occupation of Europe. The roughly fifty women and men pictured are among some nine thousand surviving Christian rescuers who have been designated by the government of Israel as the “Righteous Among the Nations.” They are honored at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, by a grove of carob trees, each of which was planted by one of the rescuers and marked by a plaque bearing his or her name.

Some rescuers such as Raoul Wallenberg are legendary for prodigious exploits that helped thousands to escape death. Others,

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including most of those portrayed in the book, “merely” provided hiding places and escape routes to a few Jews who presented themselves in the ordinary processes of life under the German occupation.

Active collaborators with the occupation are not so hard to understand. When their lands were occupied by Hitler’s troops and the deportation of the Jews began, these quite normal people did what they could to make the best of a bad situation, and some took advantage of an opportunity to settle real or imagined grudges against the hated Jews. Nor is it hard to understand the passive bystanders, who were in danger themselves, with no need to ask for more trouble. Yet the rescuers were in precisely the same dangerous and oppressive situation, and they did precisely “ask for trouble.” Such altruism in the face of mortal danger fairly cries for explanation. Who were the rescuers, and what led them to do what they did?

The extent to which rescues were attempted in a particular area depended in part on factors that were independent of the courage and altruism of the non-Jewish population. Recent history mattered. For example, there were few rescue attempts in Germany relative to the size of the prewar Jewish population, in part at least because three quarters of German Jews had managed to flee the country before the “Final Solution” was implemented. Geography also mattered. Countries like the Netherlands which were flat and open afforded relatively few hiding places, and rescue was correspondingly difficult. France, which is well endowed with woodlands and mountains, lent good cover to a variety of resistance activities, and it borders on Switzerland, which afforded safety to the fugitives. Moreover, the prewar Jewish population of France was widely dispersed and assimilated, and this made their capture and deportation difficult. An additional factor was that the Vichy government which administered a large portion of the country in the years immediately after the fall of France in 1940 was less efficient than the Germans themselves. Only 29 percent of French Jews were killed.

The differing histories of the European countries prior to the Holocaust made a difference as well. Although the Jews of Belgium were distinctive in speech and dress and most were poor compared to the Christian population, they were well protected by their neighbors, and only about half of them perished. Belgium had been invaded by the Germans during the First World War, and many Belgians were actively hostile to Germans even before they were invaded a second time. Moreover, King Leopold continued to act as

the leader of the Belgian state from his exile in England, and condemned the depredations on his Jewish subjects. The Belgian Catholic Church joined in the condemnation.

The Netherlands had been neutral in the First World War, and had not been invaded. Perhaps as a consequence it was less anti-German. Like the King of Belgium, Queen Wilhelmina fled to England, but unlike him, she left the governance of her country to civil servants who were disposed to collaborate with the invaders. Although Holland claims more than a third of the rescuers honored at Yad Vashem, 80 to 90 percent of its prewar Jewish population perished in the Holocaust.

Poland was home to three-and-a-half million Jews at the outbreak of the Second World War. Only a small minority of these spoke Polish as their first language. They attended segregated schools and were generally city dwellers in a country of peasants. Fewer than a hundred thousand of them survived. Soon after the Germans overran the country in 1939, they began to move the Jews to Warsaw, creating the infamous ghetto that ultimately served as a staging area for the transport of Jews to the death camps. The Christians of Poland, on the whole rather anti-Semitic, generally cooperated with the German plan to exterminate their fellow Poles. Hence it was particularly hazardous to be a rescuer in Poland. One could not rely on the help or even the discretion of neighbors. Still, there are nearly as many Poles honored at Yad Vashem as there are Dutch.

There is no way to characterize all of the brave people portrayed in *Rescuers*, but it may give some sense of the whole to describe a few of them. They stand out as distinctive individuals, of course, but each of them needed the explicit or tacit help of others to succeed in the complex and dangerous process of rescuing. Some were directly connected to underground resistance movements, but all of them had to depend on their neighbors' willingness to look the other way, since it was not really possible to hide Jews without someone's noticing. As Malka Drucker tells in her introduction, "It wasn't only the person who risked his or her life, but the milkman who never asked why the family needed an extra liter of milk, or the postman who didn't ask about the dark-haired child peering around the open door . . ." (pp. 13-14)

Zofia Baniecka, the daughter of a teacher and a sculptor, grew up in Warsaw where she still lives. She is pictured sitting in a lawn chair, with her head tipped back so far that her chin is more in evidence than the rest of her face, blowing a cloud of cigarette smoke into the air. Like the other rescuers, she is no longer young.

When she was a child she had attended a Catholic school with assimilated Jews, among others. Her father was killed in 1941 when their house was hit during a Russian air strike. When her family was evicted because their house was in an area that became part of the Warsaw ghetto, the underground helped her and her mother find an apartment. Both women became active in the resistance, apparently because they were outraged at the Germans' treatment of the Jews, fifty of whom they hid at various times during the war. As she says: "Anyone was taken in." Her interview, which takes place on Staten Island at the home of one of the people she rescued, closes with the following:

At the end of the war Roosevelt sold out Poland. I was arrested by the Russians because I was and still am a Polish patriot. I didn't have to ask for help because my underground friends were there to help me. . . . My husband and I struggled constantly for a free Poland. We belonged to Solidarity from the beginning, and our home is a meeting place for people to study, kind of like a free university. I am not at all religious today—not since I was eighteen have I been to church regularly—but I do still believe in human beings. There are many people who have saved my belief in humanity, and that is why it is important for people to know about this time, of Poland during the war, and that there were those of us who did try to save Jews. It is necessary for the children to know that there were such people. (p. 164)

Johtje Vos and her husband Aart, who lived in Woodstock, New York, at the time they were interviewed, are pictured on the living room couch of their country home. They are a handsome, unpretentious-looking couple with white hair, and are dressed in woolen clothes suited to their rustic environment. She is the granddaughter of a famous prime minister of Holland. As a young woman she went to live in Paris and became a free-lance journalist, which was, as she says, "a scandalous thing at the time." She married a painter and moved back to Holland, where the couple lived in a house her father bought for them in Laren, an artists' colony near Amsterdam. They had two children, and were divorced in 1940. She and Aart married in 1942 and continued to live in the house, which was on a dead-end road and was later equipped with an escape tunnel. Her account of how they began to rescue Jews went like this:

How it happened is that somebody asked us, "Listen, I have a little suitcase with some valuables and I have to go to the ghetto. Will you keep the suitcase for me?" He was a friend, and to our amazement he was a Jew. We'd never even known that because nobody knew those things in Holland. We never

talked about Jews. They were all just Dutch, that's all. So, then you said, "Well, of course I'll keep that suitcase for you." And then a week later, somebody would ask you, "Well, my child is in danger." So we said, "Of course, bring him here." Then two people said, "Well, we don't know where to go." Then by and by we got more involved in the underground. Then we had to make a decision: do we do this, go on with this? That's the moment when we made the decision. And we said yes: we couldn't do differently than say yes. (p. 80)

Pastor Marc Donadille lives in a suburb of Marseilles. He is a sweet, droll-looking man in a corduroy suit, with a small mustache and an engaging smile:

My family went to Geneva to be safe, so I was alone, but my parish knew what I was doing. People could tell I was saving Jews; when I arrived with twelve people, strangers carrying boxes, it was obvious. We provided the peasants who were hiding Jews with extra food, which we got from the surrounding farms.

In 1943 my wife left the children there with her family and returned from Geneva. One day she was at home when two Vichy policemen came to search the house. They didn't go into the special room where I made false I.D. papers, but she did have an exchange with them which shows how everyone in the area agreed that the Jews should be saved. The window was open when they came in and you could hear that a neighbor was listening to BBC news. One of the policemen said to my wife, "You should tell them to lower the volume. It's illegal to listen to BBC; you're supposed to listen only to the news from Paris or Germany." My wife replied, "Everyone listens to it! If one plays Paris or Vichy radio, they shut the windows and doors. But when one listens to English radio, one leaves everything open."

In my three townships there were no collaborators. But the authorities eventually found out, and it became more dangerous. The chief of police had been watching me, but never arrested me. Some Jews weren't careful and did things that caused them to get caught, but everyone in the region was willing to take Jews.

We knew that it was dangerous but we had accepted the risk once and for all, and that was that. Fear never haunted me. One day on a train someone said, "There's a pastor in the Cévennes who's hiding Jews!" I said, "You shouldn't say that. The pastor could really get in trouble for that," not telling him that he was talking about me. He replied, "Really? You can get into trouble for that?" Some of the people were very naive. (p. 116)

The rescuers seem to have been a varied lot, not really so out of the ordinary as one might think. Indeed, I suspect that some of the younger among them had no idea they could be either brave or altruistic until they were forced to choose between being very brave

or very cowardly. Faced with such alternatives, they knew they had no real choice. Indeed, a number of them remarked that their actions, which are to us so heroic, seemed at the time to be the normal thing to do. Ivan Beltrami, one of the rescuers, put it this way:

You know, I'm surprised you're interested in this. To me it seems so ordinary, so natural. When I was at Yad Vashem, going up to plant my tree on the Avenue of the Righteous, I said to Paldiel, director of the righteous at Yad Vashem, that I didn't think I really deserved this. He told me that all the righteous say the same thing. (p. 126)

Impetuous courage is not really uncommon. Fully clothed people who can't even swim will leap into a river if a child falls in. For many of those whose stories are told here, the first rescue was essentially impetuous. They heard a knock, they opened the door, and they did what was necessary. But impetuosity is surely not the word for the repeated efforts of people for whom rescue became all but habitual. These were people of a particular sort. Block and Drucker cite (p. 6) the general findings of a study of Christian rescuers presented by sociologist Nehama Tec in May, 1991, at a conference in New York sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

1. They don't blend into their communities. This makes them less controlled by their environments and more inclined to act on their own principles.

2. They are independent people and they know it. They do what they feel they must do, what is right, and the right thing is to help others.

3. They have a long history of doing good deeds.

4. Because they have done the right thing for a long time, it doesn't seem extraordinary to them. If you consider something your duty, you do it automatically.

5. They choose to help without rational consideration.

6. They have universalistic perceptions that transcend race and ethnicity. They can respond to the needy and helpless because they identify with victims of injustice.

These people were generally older than Block and Drucker's rescuers, and at the time of the occupation they had had more prior experience with situations that called for acts of moral courage and altruism. What the list of their traits seems to suggest is that a disposition to be altruistic is one dimension of a well-formed personality, the sort of thing that is internalized during childhood, if at

all. Ultimately, therefore, the prevalence of altruistic persons in any society depends on the characteristics of its social formation and the mode of production that underlies it. We should not be surprised, therefore, that so few people in capitalist Europe did much to help their Jewish neighbors.

Although the history of the Holocaust can make a person very pessimistic about humanity, the stories of the rescuers, which they recount with an offhand humility, are inspiring and a source of optimism to me. I met Malka Drucker and Gay Block when Ms. Drucker gave the commencement address at my son's high school graduation. She told the graduates that they must above all be caring, altruistic, and generous of spirit. When confronted by such a radical proposition, I marched up and introduced myself to its author. My conversation with her and Ms. Block led me to the remarkable people whose stories are told in *Rescuers*.

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Marx's Unfinished Project

by James Devine

Michael A. Lebowitz, *Beyond Capital: Marx's Political Economy of the Working Class*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992. 157 pp. \$16.95.

In recent years, many have come to see a crisis in the Marxian analysis of capitalism which has its source in Marx's own writings, especially *Capital*. Advocates of the so-called "new social movements" attack Marxism as being one-dimensional, that is, as neglecting the gender, racial, and environmental dimensions of struggle. Further, even this one-dimensional Marxism often has two conflicting souls. The first is the "scientific" Marx of *Capital*, who wrote of "tendencies working with iron necessity toward inevitable results," with little role for human action. It is rare these days that Marxists understand capitalism in this way, but within academia this tradition surfaces when scholars understand human actions as the necessary results of social structures (structuralism) or attribute the origins of institutions and events to the needs of capitalists or of the capitalist system (functionalism). The other is the activist Marx who saw the working class as a conscious force capable of organizing its own liberation from below, embracing slogans such as "The emancipation of the working class must be won by the working class itself."¹ Similar trends include the growing "new labor history," founded by E.P. Thompson,² focusing on the everyday efforts by working people to deal with the exploitative conditions of capitalism, and the humanistic "young Marx" of the 1844 *Manuscripts*.

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Michael Lebowitz's *Beyond Capital* provides an important insight into the origins of this crisis. He claims that one-dimensional and automatic Marxisms were able to develop a textual basis because Marx never wrote his planned book on wage labor. In 1858 Marx projected such a book to be the third of six volumes in his *Economics*, with *Capital* as only the first of the series. Besides *Wage Labor*, the others planned were on *Landed Property*, *The State*, *International Trade*, and *The World Market*. Some scholars have argued that Marx later rejected this plan, instead incorporating elements of all the six books in *Capital*.³ Lebowitz, on the other hand, argues convincingly that Marx meant to write the missing book on wage labor, or at least something very much like it. But textual evidence is far from being the main point of his book, so he rightly does not dwell on it: it would be totally consistent with his thesis if someone were to find a letter indicating conclusively that Marx had decided to abandon the early outline.

Rather, Lebowitz's methodological claim is that Marx never completed his own epistemological project, i.e., his plan for understanding capitalism and its laws of motion. In other terms, *Capital* represents an incomplete totality by Marx's own dialectical standards. What does he mean by this? It is impossible to repeat Lebowitz's argument in a short review, but Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* helps us. In it Hegel examines the complex relationship between the "servant" and the "master," arguing that neither of these two roles can exist independently, since the social role of each defines the role of the other. For Lebowitz, then, the central problem with Marx's *Capital* is that it considers only the master, i.e., the capitalist, and not the servant, the proletarian. If, as Hegel said, the truth is the whole, then Marx's *Capital* is untrue, since it is merely a partial vision. To be a true political economy of capitalism as a unified social system, it needs an analysis of the laws of motion of wage-labor to complement Marx's investigation of the laws of motion of capital.

Lebowitz shows that Marx used abstraction in a crucial way in *Capital*. To simplify matters, he isolated the master for analysis. For example, he explicitly assumed that the value of labor-power was constant, that the working class was paid this amount in wages, and that workers mostly acted as a passive mass, only sometimes reacting to the depredations of capital. Thus, the struggle between labor and capital—so important in Marx's other works—is incompletely described. Workers are treated as produced means of production and

mere passive victims, subject to the natural-seeming laws of capitalist accumulation and befuddled by the fetishism of commodities.

Since the laws of motion of capital are relatively reliable, Marx's simplifying assumptions encouraged "scientific" Marxism with its iron predictions: the Marxism of the Second and Third Internationals, or what Lebowitz calls "one-sided Marxism." Seeing class conflict without active participation of workers, this ends up sharing much of the capitalist perspective. Even the view that capitalism automatically and inevitably destroys itself shares this perspective, since rather than actively seizing power, workers end up receiving their liberation as a gift of history.

As Lebowitz points out, the partial coverage of the servant means that even the master, i.e., capital, is described incompletely and thus inaccurately. With the working class as an active force resisting capital's pressure toward immiseration and even going on the offensive, results change: capitalists must treat workers as something more than raw materials; they must be divided and conquered, controlled, and manipulated to serve profit. Further, the accumulation of capital can potentially be counteracted by the accumulation of workers' power. This critique does not reject Marx: instead, Lebowitz fills out Marx's epistemological project, in effect writing the missing book on wage labor—using Marx's letters, speeches, articles, and notes, especially his *Grundrisse*, the famous notes on economics.

The role of needs is crucial in the political economy of wage-labor. Instead of a single value of labor-power representing a subsistence with an important "historical and moral" element, Lebowitz posits a range of needs, from the physiological to the fully social, whose fulfillment is necessary for the full flowering of humanity. He shows that increasing "necessary needs"—due to the normal process of capitalist accumulation—can lead to immiseration, even with real wages rising. Further, the process of class struggle itself can raise workers' necessary needs and thus increase the value of labor power. Thus class struggle has moved back to center stage and any characterization of the worker as mere victim or productive input becomes impossible.

But how does Lebowitz deal with the first aspect of the crisis of Marxism mentioned above? That is, how can the Marxist system be opened to feminism and other movements without becoming eclectic and empiricist? As before, he works on two levels. He produces evidence about Marx's attitude toward women's oppression, racism, and environmental degradation. For example, Marx

tended to refer to women's status as "slavery" and saw capitalism as progressively destroying nature. But more importantly, he argues that to complete the totality, we must go beyond the "Abstract Proletarian," i.e., the consideration of workers solely in relationship to capitalists, responding in a mechanical way to capitalist depredations, without any role for community, family, and so forth. Just as the master was examined largely in isolation from the servant in *Capital*, we must at one level of abstraction examine the servant in isolation from the master—i.e., as a human being—in order to more fully understand the relationship between the two. This organically links the so-called "mature Marx" of *Capital* with the "young Marx" of the 1844 *Manuscripts*. The understandings that arise from taking this perspective also allow the integration of feminist, anti-racist, and other progressive concerns into Marxism. This vision cannot be deterministic because of the impossibility of pinning down the active role of the "servant" in self-liberation to any deterministic laws of motion. People develop their own politics and understandings over time, through everyday experience within their communities. This links up with the new labor history.

The obvious question is why Marx made his simplifying assumptions. As Lebowitz writes, "He was less interested in the completion of his epistemological project than in his revolutionary project." (p. 141) *Capital's* critique of political economy and its exposé of capitalism were intended to make workers conscious of their exploitation and collectively more able to liberate themselves. Marx took to heart his own dictum that the point is not simply to interpret the world but to change it. He was optimistic about the growth of proletarian self-organization and self-education. His intent was to give workers the theoretical tools they needed to succeed. But as the last century has shown, his optimism was not well founded.

If understanding anything involves understanding its limits, then anyone who wants to understand Marxism in general and *Capital* in particular should read Lebowitz's book. However, *Beyond Capital* has its own limits. Sometimes the number of quotations from Marx gets oppressive. Though the dialectical jargon is clear enough to someone who is accustomed to it, some readers may find it hard going, despite the helpful diagrams. Finally, *Beyond Capital* is no substitute for *Capital*, of course. But Lebowitz has provided us an extremely helpful guide to the real thing.

NOTES

1. For the "political" Marx, see Hal Draper's *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*. Four volumes. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977, 1978, 1986, 1990).
2. See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*. (New York: Pantheon, 1964.)
3. See Kenneth Lapides, "Henryk Grossman and the Debate on the Theoretical Status of Marx's Capital," *Science and Society*, 56-2 (Summer 1992) pp. 133-162.

(Continued from inside back cover)

mostly conservative and cautious assistants he has surrounded himself with, and unwilling to make a fight of it. People could become disillusioned, and things would tend to return to "normal." (2) Clinton could get enough of his "plan" through Congress to give it a chance to prove itself. It wouldn't make much difference, but people might be encouraged to believe progress was still possible and to demand more radical reforms. Clinton might get his dander up and decide his best course would be to assume leadership of the popular thrust even if it meant going a lot further than he originally intended to.

You take it from there. It is worth adding that (1) is what dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries on Wall Street and in corporate boardrooms are hoping for, and (2) is what they fear will happen.

It has been called to our attention that the quotation about New York commuters using more energy in a week than Africa uses for all purposes in a year (*MR*, November 1992, p. 10) is a vast overstatement. We apologize for this error.

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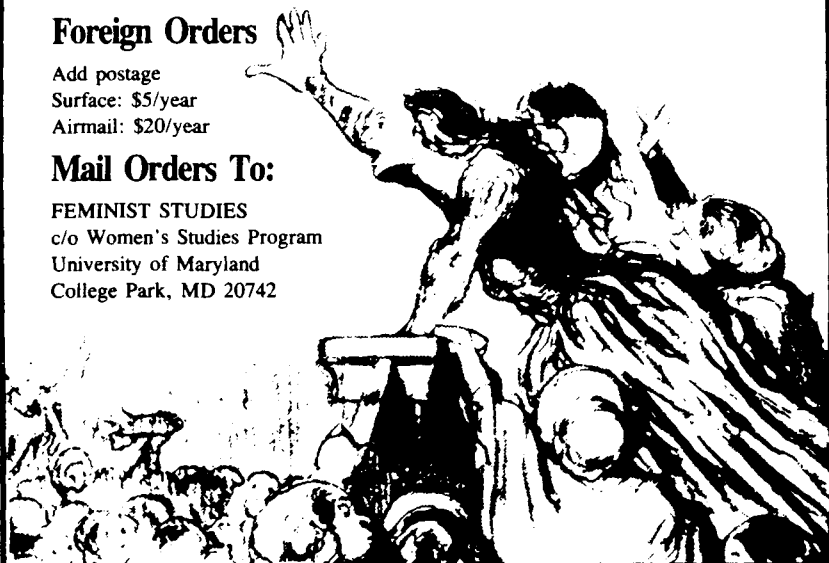
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in some respects unprecedented—post-Second World War prosperity came to an end. Owing to a confluence of special and to a large extent unique circumstances, working people in that postwar period of prosperity had it better than their predecessors in any earlier period of American history. Apart from blacks and a segment of the white youth radicalized by the Vietnam War, they were a conservative lot who had little interest in politics, allowing a self-conscious and powerful ruling class on the one hand to strengthen its hold over the government and the dominant social and cultural institutions of the country, and on the other hand to whittle away at the gains working people had won during the Great Depression and the Second World War. When the era of postwar prosperity came to an end with the recession of 1974-1975, the working people were unprepared and unprotected, easy victims of the savage onslaught mounted by capital through the agency of an atavistic Republican Party. Real wages declined, unemployment and related issues of job quality and insecurity increased, the rich grew richer and the poor grew poorer as never before in U.S. history. All in all the 1970s and 1980s were a period of regression and defeat for the vast majority of the American people. And on top of that came the end of the Cold War and the worst recession in over fifty years.

This was the setting for the presidential election of 1992. The need for change was palpable; only a small minority were benefitting from, and hence were satisfied with, the *status quo*. Neither Republicans nor Democrats, both ruling-class parties that had in fact shared responsibility for all that went before, had anything to offer. About a third of the vote went for Bush, the only candidate with a record of experience. The nearly 20 percent that went for Perot can be counted as pretty much pure protest, and the remainder for Clinton had a large element of protest and a core of habitual Democrats. About 45 percent of those who would have been eligible to vote opted out. Clearly, the outcome of the election was a repudiation of the Republicans and a not very ringing mandate for undefined change.

Still hope springs eternal. Amid the hype and excitement of a changing of the guard in Washington, people's attention was attracted to the political process which at least for the time being claimed so much of the media's coverage. Clinton's early moves, reversing some of Reagan's and Bush's most provocatively reactionary gestures, had symbolic significance: maybe change was possible after all. And then came his virtuoso performance in the economics speeches. He came on as very much a take-charge leader who was in command of himself and his material and knew what he wanted to do. Perhaps most important, he seemed ready to stand up to the rich who had been the beneficiaries of such extravagant government largesse during the two preceding administrations. People wanted to believe in the possibility of real change, and now all at once it seemed as though it might make sense to do so. Overnight, it was a new ballgame. Opinion polls showed a sharp increase in Clinton's approval rating as well as strong support for his "plan." Hope, until recently so subdued, had suddenly turned into expectation.

What are likely to be the consequences of this new national mood? No certain predictions are possible of course. But as of now two sharply contrasting trajectories seem possible. (1) The momentum toward change could fizzle out, sabotaged and blocked by powerful enemies in and out of Congress. Clinton could back down, lacking any serious support from the

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THE RUSH TO DEVELOPMENT

Economic Change and Political Struggle in South Korea

MARTIN HART-LANDSBERG

After thirty years of rapid economic growth, South Korea is widely promoted as demonstrating the superiority of free market capitalism. Along with Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong, it is considered a great success story and model for third world development.

In this fascinating study, Martin Hart-Landsberg argues that such an assessment is seriously flawed. His clear and comprehensive discussion of South Korea's highly centralized system of state planning shows that economic success has less to do with free market or free trade policies than with thorough state economic control.

Hart-Landsberg's study makes it clear that while South Korea offers no ready-made development model, its experience nevertheless has much to teach those concerned with creating democratic and sustainable development.

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